

A TREASURY OF  
MYSTIC TERMS





# A TREASURY OF MYSTIC TERMS

PART III  
SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE &  
PRACTICE



VOLUME 12

JOHN DAVIDSON

RADHA SOAMI SATSANG BEAS

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EDITED AND LARGELY WRITTEN BY

JOHN DAVIDSON

WITH THE HELP OF AN INTERNATIONAL TEAM

*A Treasury of Mystic Terms* has been compiled using the collective skills of an international team of researchers, contributors, assistant editors and readers with a wide variety of religious and cultural backgrounds. All members of the team are spiritual seekers, most of whom have found inspiration and encouragement in the teachings of the mystics of Beas in India. All those involved have given freely to this project, both as a source of inspiration for themselves, and as a way of showing to others the essential unity behind all the apparent variety in religion, philosophy, and mysticism.

Everybody has a perspective or a bias – coloured glasses through which they view the world. So although every attempt has been made to handle each entry within its own religious or mystical context, if any particular perspective is detected, it will inevitably be that of the contributors and their perception of mysticism. This does not mean, of course, that the contributors have always been in agreement. The preparation of the *Treasury* has often resulted in healthy debate!

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(INNER PEACE AND LOVE – VIJÑĀNA)

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

IN THE COURSE OF COMPILING AND WRITING THE *TREASURY*, the editorial team have drawn on two major sources. Firstly, the scriptures and writings of mystics and others who have written on spiritual and mystical matters. Secondly, the works of scholars concerning these texts and their associated traditions. To all of these, we will be forever grateful. Among the mystics, we owe especial gratitude to the masters of Beas who have been, and who remain, the primary source of spiritual inspiration and perspective for most of the *Treasury*'s editorial team.

Sources of the many citations have been given in the references, endnotes, and bibliography. Among these are some that must receive special mention:

The translations of the Buddhist *Dhammapada* are founded mostly upon the work of S. Radhakrishnan and Narada Thera.

Most of the translations of the *Bhagavad Gītā* have drawn upon the earlier translations of S. Radhakrishnan and Swami Tapasyananda.

Quotations from the *Ādi Granth* are from English translations endorsed by the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee.

The sayings of Heraclitus are found only as fragments, quoted in the works of other writers of antiquity. Various scholarly numbering systems exist for these fragments, the system employed here being that used by Philip Wheelwright in *Heraclitus* (Princeton University Press, 1959).

Most of the translations of Rūmī's *Maśnavī* are based upon the work of R.A. Nicholson.

Many scholarly translations of Zarathushtra's *Gāthās* into European languages have been made from defective Pahlavi translations. The translations here are from the Avestan, and are based largely on the original work of Dr I.R.S. Taraporewala.

For translations of the Buddhist Pali texts, we have made extensive use of *Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Majjhima Nikāya*, tr. Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli, ed. & rev. Bhikkhu Bodhi (1995); *The Long Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Dīgha Nikāya*, tr. Maurice Walshe (1995); *The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Saṃyutta Nikāya*, 2 vols., tr. Bhikkhu Bodhi (2000); *The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Aṅguttara Nikāya*, tr. Bhikkhu Bodhi (2012); all published by Wisdom Publications of Somerville, Massachusetts; together with various

translations by Thanissaro Bhikkhu, published by Access to Insight ([accesstoinsight.org](http://accesstoinsight.org) and [dhammatalks.org](http://dhammatalks.org)).

The indigenous Guaraní of eastern Paraguay, made up of three large subgroups – the Mbyá, the Paí Cayuá, and the Avá-Chiripá – are described in books and articles by the most notable experts in this field, Miguel Alberto Bartolomé, León Cádogan, Alfred Métraux, and Egon Schaden. Most of the information used for the Guaraní mystical terms derives from these scholars' studies of the Mybá and Avá-Chiripá. If a term is general to all indigenous Guaraní, it is labelled (G); if a term is known only to apply to the Avá-Chiripá subgroup, it is labelled (AC). The transliteration conventions used for all Avá-Chiripá terms are the same as those used in Miguel Alberto Bartolomé's article, *Shamanism and Religion Among the Avá-Chiripá*, which resulted from his field studies in the northeastern region of Paraguay in 1968 and 1969. Bartolomé explains that since Paraguayan Guaraní has an officially recognized written form, he does not use phonetic symbols except the letter 'y' for the sixth guttural vowel.

Particular acknowledgement must be made of the extensive compilation of material made by Dr Javad Nurbakhsh in his 15-volume *Farhang-i Nurbakhsh: Iṣṭilāḥāt-i Taṣawwuf*, translated by Terry Graham *et al.* (1984–2001) as *Sufi Symbolism: The Nurbakhsh Encyclopedia of Sufi Terminology*. Dr Nurbakhsh's considerable contribution to Sufi literature has been of great help to us in the compilation of the Sufi entries in the *Treasury*, and we have drawn upon his work, both in the Persian and its English translation. The numerous extracts are reprinted by permission of Khaniqahi-Nimatullahi Publications.

Excerpts from *The Philokalia: The Complete Text, Compiled by St Nikodimos of the Holy Mountain and St Makarios of Corinth*, ed. & tr. G.E.H. Palmer, Philip Sherrard, Kallistos Ware (Faber & Faber, London), copyright © by The Eling Trust (1979, 1981, 1984, 1995) are reprinted by permission of Metropolitan Kallistos and The Eling Trust.

Existing dictionaries and encyclopaedias are naturally of great assistance when preparing a work such as the *Treasury*. We gladly acknowledge the particular help we have received from *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Yoga*, Georg Feuerstein (Paragon House, New York, 1990); *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, ed. H.A.R. Gibb *et al.* (Brill, Leiden, 1960–2005); *The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Zen Buddhism*, Helen Baroni (Rosen, New York, 2002); *Japanese-English Buddhist Dictionary*, Daito Shuppansha (Tokyo, 1965); *A Dictionary of Japanese Buddhist Terms*, Hisao Inagaki (Nagata Bunshodo, Kyoto, 1984); *Oxford Dictionary of Buddhism*, Damien Keown (Oxford University Press, 2003); *Buddhist Dictionary: Manual of Buddhist Terms and Doctrines*, Ven. Nyanatiloka (Buddhist Publication Society, Sri Lanka, 1988); *The*

*Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, Robert Buswell & Donald Lopez (Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 2014); *A Comprehensive Etymological Dictionary of the Hebrew Language for Readers of English*, ed. Ernest Klein (Carta Jerusalem, University of Haifa, 1987); *Encyclopedia Judaica* (Judaica Multimedia, Jerusalem, 1997); *Jewish Encyclopedia* (Funk & Wagnalls, New York, 1901–6, [jewishencyclopedia.com](http://jewishencyclopedia.com)); *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (Robert Appleton Co., 1907–14); *Wikipedia* ([wikipedia.org](http://wikipedia.org), 2001–); *Hawaiian Dictionary*, Mary Kawena Pukui & Samuel Elbert (University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, 1986); *Te Aka: Māori-English, English-Māori Dictionary and Index*, John Moorfield ([maoridictionary.co.nz](http://maoridictionary.co.nz)); *A Dictionary of the Maori Language*, Herbert Williams ([nzetc.victoria.ac.nz/tm/scholarly/tei-WillDict.html](http://nzetc.victoria.ac.nz/tm/scholarly/tei-WillDict.html)); and *The A to Z of Jainism*, Kristi Wiley (Vision, New Delhi, 2006).

Thanks are also due to Dr John Smith, now retired from the Faculty of Oriental Studies, Cambridge University, for his Unicode character fonts.

The proposed twenty-three volumes of this work, of which sixteen have now been published, constitute a non-profit, educational, and scholarly project. The elucidation of terms and the numerous citations receive significant commentary, often bringing fresh insights regarding their meaning and relationship to other terms, with inter-faith comparison highlighted by the arrangement of entries under common subject headings. By these means we seek to contribute to spiritual understanding for global human benefit and the promotion of spiritual, religious, and cultural open-mindedness. We recognize that, in all probability, the authors of the original source texts wrote their works for the benefit of humanity, not for personal profit or acclaim. We have endeavoured to walk in their footsteps.

# ABBREVIATIONS

## **General**

Abbreviations that are a common part of written language are not included in this list.

C4th	fourth century ( <i>e.g.</i> )
<i>cf.</i>	<i>confero</i> , compare (L. I compare)
<i>col.</i>	column
<i>fol.</i>	folio
<i>ff.</i>	and the following (pages, lines, <i>etc.</i> )
<i>lit.</i>	literally
n.	foot- or endnote(s)
<i>passim</i>	here and there throughout (L)
p.	page
pp.	pages
pron.	pronounced
ret.	retrieved web page, followed by the month and year of retrieval
►1 ►2 ►4	Indicates a yet-to-be-published entry in Parts I, II, or IV

## **Dates**

<i>b.</i>	born
<i>c.</i>	circa, about
<i>d.</i>	died
<i>fl.</i>	flourished
<i>r.</i>	reigned or ruled
AH	<i>Anno Hegirae</i> , Muslim lunar calendar, from 622 CE, the Hegira ( <i>al-Hijrah</i> ), the year of Muḥammad's flight to Madīnah
BCE	Before Common Era, equivalent to BC.
CE	Common Era, equivalent to AD.
SH	Solar Hijri, the official solar calendar of Iran and Afghanistan, starting on the vernal equinox.

## **Languages**

A	Arabic	Av	Avestan	Fr	French
AC	Avá-Chiripá	C	Chinese	G	Guaraní
Am	Aramaic	Es	Spanish	Gk	Greek

H Hindi	Md Mandaean	Pv Pahlavi
He Hebrew	Mo Māori	S Sanskrit
Hw Hawaiian	P Persian	Su Sumerian
J Japanese	Pa Pali	T Tibetan
L Latin	Pk Prakrit	U Urdu
M Marathi	Pu Punjabi	

### Sources Cited

See *Bibliography* for full details of published works. Published collections of the writings of Indian Saints have been referred to in source references as below. Other collections published as the *Bānī*, *Granthāvalī*, *Padāvalī* or *Shabdāvalī* of various Indian Saints have been similarly abbreviated.

<i>Bullā Sāhib kā Shabd Sār</i>	<i>Shabd Sār</i>
<i>Charaṇdās Jī kī Bānī</i>	<i>Bānī</i>
<i>Dariyā Sāhib ke chune hue Shabd</i>	<i>Chune hue Shabd</i>
<i>Dhanī Dharamdās Jī kī Shabdāvalī</i>	<i>Shabdāvalī</i>
<i>Kabīr Granthāvalī</i>	<i>Granthāvalī</i>
<i>Kabīr Sāhib kā Bījak</i>	<i>Bījak</i>
<i>Kabīr Sākhī Sangrah</i>	<i>Sākhī Sangrah</i>
<i>Keshavdās Jī kī Amīghūnt</i>	<i>Amīghūnt</i>
<i>Kullīyāt-i Bulleh Shāh</i>	<i>Kullīyāt</i>
<i>Mīrā Bṛihat Padāvalī</i>	<i>Bṛihat Padāvalī</i>
<i>Mīrā Sudhā Sindhu</i>	<i>Sindhu</i>
<i>Nāmdev kī Hindi Padāvalī</i>	<i>Padāvalī</i>
<i>Ravidās Darshan</i>	<i>Darshan</i>
<i>Sant Guru Ravidās Vāṇī</i>	<i>Vāṇī</i>
<i>Shrī Nāmdev Gāthā</i>	<i>Gāthā</i>
<i>Tulsīdās kī Bārahmāsī</i>	<i>Bārahmāsī</i>
<i>Tulsī Sāhib Hāthrasvāle kī Shabdāvalī</i>	<i>Shabdāvalī</i>

Other books and texts cited are abbreviated as below. Full details are in the bibliography:

AAA	<i>The Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles</i> , 2 vols., tr. W.R. Wright.
AAF1–2	<i>Awṛād al-Aḥbāb wa Fuṣūṣ al-Ādāb</i> , 2 vols., Abū-al-Mufaḥkhir Yahyā Bākhārī, ed. Iraj Afshār.
AAGA	<i>Shrimad Rājchandra's Ātmasiddhi</i> , tr. Manu Doshi.
ABSC	<i>Atma-Bodha of Śrī Ādi Śaṅkarācārya</i> , Swami Chinmayananda.
ADP	<i>Abandonment to Divine Providence</i> , J.-P. de Caussade, tr. J. Beevers.
AFHD	<i>Aristotle</i> , W. Jaeger.

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AGG	<i>Sri Guru Granth Sahib</i> , 4 vols., tr. Dr Gopal Singh.
AGK	<i>Sri Guru Granth Sahib: Khalsa Consensus Translation</i> , tr. Dr Sant Singh Khalsa.
AH1–2	<i>Against Heresies</i> , in <i>The Writings of Irenaeus</i> , 2 vols., tr. A. Roberts & W.H. Rambaud.
AKKS	<i>Ācārya Kundakunda's Samayasāra</i> , tr. A. Chakravarti.
AMAS	<i>Al-Mu'jam al-Ṣūfī</i> , Khānam Dr Su'ād al-Ḥakīm.
AMBF	<i>Aḥādīs-i Maṣnavī</i> , B. Furūzānfar.
AMM	<i>Dīvān-i Ḥakīm Abū al-Majd Majdūd ibn-i Ādam Sanā'ī Ghaznavī</i> , ed. Mudarris Riḏavī.
AMU	<i>ʿAwārīf al-Maʿarīf</i> , Shihāb al-Dīn ʿAbū Hafs ʿUmar al-Suhrawardī.
AMZ	<i>Arzish-i Mīrās-i Ṣūfīyah</i> , ʿAbd al-Ḥusayn Zarrīn Kōb.
ANKN	<i>Anguttara Nikaya</i> , tr. K. Nizamis.
ANT	<i>The Apocryphal New Testament</i> , tr. M.R. James.
ANTB	<i>Anguttara Nikaya</i> , tr. Thanissaro Bhikkhu.
AOT	<i>The Apocryphal Old Testament</i> , ed. H.E.D. Sparks.
APAK	<i>Ashta Pahuda</i> , Acharya Kundkund, tr. Paras Das Jain Niyaytirthi.
APAP	<i>Applied Philosophy of Anekanta</i> , Samani S. Prajna.
ASNC	<i>Apocryphal Scriptures; BDK English Tripiṭaka Series</i> .
AVVN	<i>Aṣṭasāhasrī</i> , Vidyānanda, ed. Vaṃṣīdhara.
AYA	<i>The Holy Qurʾān</i> , tr. ʿAbdullah Yūsuf ʿAlī.
AZJW	<i>The A to Z of Jainism</i> , Kristi Wiley.
BBDG	<i>A Buddhist Bible</i> , Dwight Goddard.
BCSD	<i>Buddhist Chinese-Sanskrit Dictionary</i> , Akira Hirakawa.
BCSD	<i>The Book of Certainty</i> , tr. Martin Lings.
BDC	<i>The Book of Divine Consolation of the Blessed Angela of Foligno</i> , tr. M. Steegman.
BEDC	<i>Buddhism: Its Essence and Development</i> , Edward Conze.
BES	<i>Black Elk Speaks</i> , John Neihardt.
BESW	<i>Black Elk</i> , Wallace Black Elk & William Lyon.
BGT	<i>Bhagavad Gītā</i> , tr. Swāmī Tapasyānanda.
BMJ1–2	<i>Bet ha-Midrash</i> , 2 vols., A. Jellinek.
BOS	<i>Badāyī</i> ʿ, tr. Lucas White King.
BPSG	<i>The Book of the Poor in Spirit</i> , A Friend of God, tr. C.F. Kelley.
BTAD	<i>Basic Themes</i> , Ajaan Lee Dhammadharo, tr. Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu.
BTB	<i>The Book of the Twelve Beguines</i> , Jan Van Ruysbroeck, tr. J. Francis.
BTCV	<i>The Bodhisambhāra Treatise Commentary</i> , comm. Bhikshu Vaśitva, tr. Bhikshu Dharmamitra.
BWIC	<i>Ibn ʿAtaʾ Illah: The Book of Wisdom</i> , tr. V. Danner, and Kwaja Abdullah Ansari: <i>Intimate Conversations</i> , tr. W. Thackston.
C108	<i>108 Upanishads</i> , tr. various.

CBD	<i>The Conference of the Birds</i> , Farid ud-Din Attar, tr. Afkham Darbandi & Dick Davis.
CDBB	<i>The Connected Discourses of the Buddha</i> , 2 vols., tr. Bhikkhu Bodhi.
CDP	<i>The Collected Dialogues of Plato</i> , ed. E. Hamilton & H. Cairns.
CGAP	<i>St Augustine: Concerning the City of God against the Pagans</i> , tr. Henry Bettenson.
CIMK	<i>Calm and Insight</i> , Bhikku Khantipalo.
CPM	<i>The Canonical Prayerbook of the Mandaean</i> , tr. E.S. Drower.
CPMS	<i>Cultivating Perfection</i> , Louis Komjathy.
CPS	<i>Commentaire sur les paradoxes des soufis (Sharh-e Shathîyât)</i> , Ruzbehan Baqli Shirazi, ed. Henry Corbin.
CREB	<i>Concept and Reality in Early Buddhist Thought</i> , Ñāṇananda Bhikkhu.
CSCM	<i>Cāritrasāra</i> , Cāmuṇḍarāya.
CSK	<i>The Cell of Self-Knowledge</i> , ed. Edmund Gardner.
CSTM	<i>Cultivating Stillness</i> , tr. Eva Wong.
CTMP	<i>The Book of Chuang Tzu</i> , tr. Martin Palmer.
CTPQ	<i>Quan Tang Shi</i> ; Chinese Text Project.
CTT	<i>Chuang Tzu</i> , tr. Herbert Giles.
CTW	<i>The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu</i> , tr. Burton Watson.
CU	<i>The Cloud of Unknowing</i> , tr. William Johnston.
CUCW	<i>The Cloud of Unknowing</i> , tr. Clifton Wolters.
CUEU	<i>The Cloud of Unknowing</i> , tr. Evelyn Underhill.
CW	<i>Angelus Silesius: The Cherubic Wanderer</i> , tr. Maria Shradý.
CWJC	<i>The Collected Works of St John of the Cross</i> , tr. K. Kavanaugh & O. Rodriguez.
CWJC1–3	<i>The Complete Works of Saint John of the Cross</i> , 3 vols., tr. E.A. Peers.
CWSV1–9	<i>Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda</i> , 9 vols.
CWT1–3	<i>The Collected Works of St. Teresa of Avila</i> , 3 vols., tr. Kieran Kavanaugh & Otilio Rodriguez.
CWTA1–3	<i>The Complete Works of Saint Teresa of Jesus</i> , 3 vols., tr. E.A. Peers.
DASN	<i>Dīwān-i ‘Aṭṭār</i> , incl. <i>Qaṣā’id</i> , <i>Tarjīāt</i> , va <i>Ghazaliyāt</i> , ed. S. Nafīsī.
DBSL	“Shekhinah,” Colin Low.
DCMU	<i>Dadu: The Compassionate Mystic</i> , K.N. Upadhyaya.
DDB1–2	<i>Dādū Dayāl kī Bānī</i> , 2 vols.
DF	<i>Divine Flashes</i> , F. ‘Iraqī, tr. W.C. Chittick & P.L. Wilson.
DFQM	<i>Dīwān ibn al-Fāriḍ</i> , ‘Umar ibn ‘Alī Sharaf al-Dīn Abū al-Qāsim al-Miṣrī.
DG1–2	<i>Dariyā Granthāvalī</i> , 2 vols., D.B. Shāstrī.
DHA	<i>Dīwān-i Khwājah Ḥāfiẓ Shīrāzī</i> , ed. Abū al-Qāsim Anjavī Shīrāzī.

- DHK *Daoism Handbook*, ed. Livia Kohn.
- DHM *Dīvān-i Ḥāfiẓ*.
- DHWC *The Dīvān-i-Ḥāfiẓ*, 2 vols., Khwāja Shamsu-d-Dīn Muḥammad-i-Ḥāfiẓ-i-Shīrāzī, tr. H. Wilberforce Clarke.
- DIH *Dīvān-i Ḥāfiẓ*, ed. Qāzi Sajjād Ḥusayn.
- DK1–3 *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, 3 vols., H. Diels, ed. W. Kranz.
- DKK *Dīvān-i Kamāl al-Dīn Mas‘ūd-i Khujandī*, ed. ‘Azīz Dawlatābādī.
- DMK *Dīvān-i Mushtāqīyah*, Muẓaffar ‘Alī Shāh Kirmānī, ed. Javād Nūrbakhsh.
- DNTB *Dīgha Nikaya*, tr. Thanissaro Bhikkhu.
- DP1–4 *The Dialogues of Plato*, 4 vols., tr. B. Jowett.
- DPN *The Dhammapada*, Narada Thera.
- DPR *The Dhammapada*, tr. S Radhakrishnan.
- DS1–19 *Dàoshū shū’er zhǒng*, 19 titles, Liú Yīmíng.
- DSD1–2 *Damascii successoris dubitationes et solutiones*, 2 vols., C.É. Ruelle.
- DSMR *Dīvān-i Kāmil-i Shams-i Maghribī*, Muḥammad Shīrīn Maghribī.
- DSNS *Dravya Sangraha*, Nemichandra Siddhantideva, tr. S.C. Ghoshal.
- DSPV *Documentos saludables para las almas piadosas*, D.P. de Valdivia.
- DSSK *Dariya Sahib: Saint of Bihar*, K.N. Upadhyaya.
- DZ1–1487 *Dàoàng*, refers to the *Zhèngtǒng dàoàng*, 1487 titles in 60 vols.
- ECMR “La encarnación y la concepción,” León Cádogan.
- EDJS *Ethical Doctrines in Jainism*, K.C. Sogani.
- EDSB *Early Daoist Scriptures*, Stephen Bokenkamp.
- EDYF *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Yoga*, Georg Feuerstein.
- EHS1–2 *The Essays and Hymns of Synesius of Cyrene*, 2 vols., tr. A. Fitzgerald.
- EIM *Early Islamic Mysticism*, Michael Sells.
- EMCC *Expositio moralis et mystica in Canticum Canticorum*, 2 vols., Luis de la Puente.
- ESED *Eihei shingi*, Eihei Dōgen, tr. Soto Zen Text Project.
- ETBH *Everyday Tao*, Deng Ming-Dao.
- FBFL *Fundamentals of Buddhism*, Nyanatiloka Mahathera.
- FCWM *Fools Crow: Wisdom and Power*, Thomas Mails.
- FFNA *Fawā’id al-Fu’ād*, Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyā’, Kvājah Amīr Ḥasan ‘Alā Sijzī & Khvājah Ḥasan Śānī Niẓāmī.
- FKG *The Feats of the Knowers of God*, Shams al-Dīn Aḥmad-e Aflākī, tr. John O’Kane.
- FLI *Farhang-i Lughāt va-Iṣṭilāḥāt va-Ta’bīrāt-i ‘Irfānī*, J. Sajjādī.
- FLML *The Fire of Love and The Mending of Life*, Richard Rolle, tr. Richard Misyn, ed. Frances Comper.
- FLRR *The Fire of Love*, Richard Rolle, tr. Clifton Wolters.



FM1–4	<i>Futūḥāt al-Makkīyah</i> , 4 vols., Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn ‘Arabī.
FMIA1–9	<i>Futūḥāt al-Makkīyah</i> , 9 vols., Muḥyī al-Dīn ibn al-‘Arabī, ed. Aḥmad Shams al-Dīn.
FNI1–15	<i>Farhang-i Nūrbakhsh: Iṣṭilāḥāt-i Taṣawwuf</i> , 15 vols., J. Nūrbakhsh.
FSC	<i>Four Sufi Classics</i> , tr. W.H.T. Gairdner & David Pendlebury.
FSSN	<i>Four Sublime States</i> , Ven. Nyanaponika Thera.
GCK	<i>Ghazālī’s Book of Counsel for Kings</i> , tr. F.R.C. Bagley.
GGD	<i>Gemstones of the Good Dhamma</i> , comp. & tr. S. Dhammika.
GGG	<i>From Glory to Glory</i> , tr. H. Musurillo.
GIP	<i>The Graces of Interior Prayer</i> , A. Poulain, tr. L.L.Y. Smith.
GPM1–2	<i>The Guide of the Perplexed</i> , 2 vols., Moses Maimonides, tr. Shlomo Pines.
GPM	<i>Guide for the Perplexed</i> , Moses Maimonides, tr. M. Friedlander.
GR1–2	<i>Ghaṭ Rāmāyan</i> , 2 vols., Tulsī Sāhib; Belvedere.
GRS	<i>Maṣnavī-i Gulshan-i Rāz</i> , Shaykh Maḥmūd Shabistārī, ed. Aḥmad Muḥammad Mullāyārī.
GRSS	<i>Gulshan-i Raz</i> , tr. E.H. Whinfield.
GS	<i>The Gnostic Scriptures</i> , Bentley Layton.
GSR	<i>Gnosis on the Silk Road</i> , tr. H-J. Klimkeit.
HAAl	<i>Al-Ḥikam al-‘Aṭā’iyah</i> , Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Illāh, comm. Ibn ‘Abbād al-Nafazī al-Turandī.
HAG	<i>Hermetica</i> , tr. Walter Scott.
HDP1–9	<i>Handbooks for Daoist Practice</i> , 10 vols., tr. Louis Komjathy.
HDP3	<i>Yellow Thearch’s Basic Questions</i> , tr. Louis Komjathy.
HGCH	<i>Hermetica</i> , tr. Brian Copenhaver.
HHG	<i>The First Book of the Ḥadīqatu’l-Ḥaqīqat</i> , Ḥakīm Abū’l-Majd Majdūd Sanā’ī of Ghazna, tr. J. Stephenson (English).
HHGP	<i>The First Book of the Ḥadīqatu’l-Ḥaqīqat</i> , Ḥakīm Abū’l-Majd Majdūd Sanā’ī of Ghazna, ed. J. Stephenson (Persian).
HHS	<i>Ḥadīqat al-Ḥaqīqat wa Sharḥ at al-Ṭarīqat</i> , Abū al-Majd Majdūd Sanā’ī, ed. Mudarris Riṣavī.
HIS	<i>Sharḥ-i Hikmat al-Ishrāq of Suhrawardī</i> , ‘Allāma Quṭb al-Dīn Maḥmūd Shīrāzī, ed. A. Nourani & M. Mohaghegh.
HJBB	<i>A Handbook of Jainology</i> , Acharyadeo Shri Bhuvanbhanijsoorishwarji, tr. K. Ramappa.
HLLJ	<i>Holy Living: Saints and Saintliness in Judaism</i> , Louis Jacobs.
HLT	<i>The History and Life of the Reverend Doctor John Tauler of Strasbourg</i> , tr. Susanna Winkworth.
HMV	<i>W.B. Henning Memorial Volume</i> , ed. M. Boyce & I. Gershevitch.
HPET	<i>In the Hope of Nibbana</i> , Winston L. King.
HPSD	<i>Hathapradipika of Svatmarama</i> , tr. Swami Digambarji & Pt. Radhunathashastri Kokaje.

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HPW	<i>Heraclitus</i> , P. Wheelwright.
HQSA	<i>The Holy Qur'ān: English Translation of the Meaning and Commentary</i> .
HR2	"Handschriften-Reste in Estrangelo-Schrift aus Turfan, Chinesisch-Turkistan," F.W.K. Müller.
HSB	<i>Hadith Sahih al-Bukhari</i> , tr. Muhsin Khan.
HSDM	<i>The Hunger of the Soul: A Spiritual Diary</i> , Nancy Mayorga.
HSL1–2	<i>The Heritage of Sufism</i> , 2 vols., ed. Leonard Lewisohn.
HSNV	<i>Hōnen's Senchakushū</i> , tr. Senchakushū English Translation Project.
HTKS	<i>Haṭhatatvakaumudī</i> , ed. M.L. Gharote.
HVP	<i>Commentary of Hierocles on the Golden Verses of Pythagoras</i> , A. Dacier, tr. N. Rowe.
HYP	<i>Hatha Yoga Pradipika</i> , tr. Pancham Sinh.
HYPM	<i>Hatha Yoga Pradipika</i> , Swami Muktibodhananda & Swami Satyananda Saraswati.
IBTS	<i>An Introduction to Buddhism</i> , Peter Harvey.
IC	<i>The Imitation of Christ</i> , Thomas à Kempis, tr. R. Whitford, ed. H. Gardiner.
ICM	<i>Interior Castle or the Mansions</i> , St Teresa, tr. Benedictines of Stanbrook, ed. B. Zimmerman.
ICTK	<i>The Imitation of Christ</i> , Thomas à Kempis, tr. Leo Sherley Price.
IDL	<i>Introduction to the Devout Life</i> , St Francis de Sales, tr. M. Day.
IKJ	<i>Al-Insān al-Kāmil fī Ma'rīfat al-Awākhir wa al-Awā'il</i> , Shaykh 'Abd al-Karīm al-Jīlī, ed. 'Aṣim Ibrāhīm al-Kayālī.
ILP	<i>Iamblichus' Life of Pythagoras</i> , Thomas Taylor.
IP1–2	<i>Indian Philosophy</i> , 2 vols., S. Radhakrishnan.
IS	<i>Iṣṭilāḥāt-i Šūfīyah</i> , Farīd Aḥmad Šamdī.
ISMA	<i>Iṣṭilāḥāt al-Shaykh Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn 'Arabī</i> , ed. B.A.W. al-Jābī.
JB	<i>The Jerusalem Bible</i> .
JCL	<i>Tanakh: The Holy Scriptures</i> ; in <i>The CD-ROM Judaic Classics Library</i> .
JEMS	<i>The Jade Emperor's Mind Seal Classic</i> , tr. Stuart Olson.
JH1–108	<i>Dàoàng jīnghuá</i> , 108 titles.
JLP	<i>Journey to the Lord of Power</i> , Ibn al-'Arabī, tr. R.T. Harris.
JMT	<i>The Jewish Mystical Tradition</i> , Ben Zion Bokser.
JOLG	<i>The Jewel Ornament of Liberation</i> , sGam.po.pa, tr. H. Guenther.
JPMM	<i>Jaina Psychology</i> , Mohanlal Mehta.
JPP1–2	<i>Jain Philosophy and Practice</i> , 2 vols., comp. Jaina Education Committee.
JPPB	<i>Some Types of Jewish-Palestinian Piety from 70 B.C.E. to 70 C.E.</i> , Adolph Büchler.
JPPR	<i>Jaina Perspective in Philosophy and Religion</i> , Ramjee Singh.

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JPRN	<i>Jaina Philosophy and Religion</i> , tr. Nagin J. Shah.
JSMJ	<i>Jōdo Shinshū</i> , James C. Dobbins.
JTBM	<i>The Jhanas in Theravada Buddhist Meditation</i> , H. Gunaratana.
JTPB	<i>Jain Theory of Perception</i> , Pushpa Bothra.
JVLK	<i>Jaina View of Life</i> , T.G. Kalghati.
JY1–315	<i>Dào zàng jǐ yāo</i> , 315 titles in 10 vols., ed. Chén Dàlì et al.
JYMS	<i>Jaina Yoga</i> , R. Williams.
KB	<i>The Jerusalem Bible</i> , English text rev. & ed. Harold Fisch.
KFF	<i>Kitāb Fīhi mā Fīhi</i> , Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī, ed. B. Furūzānfar.
KG	<i>Kabīr Granthāvalī</i> , ed. Shyām Sundardās.
KGSD	<i>The Kiss of God</i> , Michael Fishbane.
KHI	<i>Kullīyāt-i Shaykh Fakhr al-dīn Ibrāhīm Hamadānī ‘Irāqī</i> , ed. Sa‘īd Nafīsī.
KIFT1–4	<i>Kashshāf Iṣṭilāhāt al-Funūn</i> , 4 vols., Muḥammad ‘Alī ibn ‘Alī al-Tahānawī, ed. Aḥmad Ḥasan Basaj.
KJV	<i>The Bible: Authorized King James Version</i> .
KLT	<i>Kitāb al-Luma’ fī al-Taṣawwuf</i> , Abū Naṣr al-Sarrāj, ed. R.A. Nicholson (English).
KLTA	<i>Kitāb al-Luma’ fī al-Taṣawwuf</i> , Abū Naṣr al-Sarrāj, ed. R.A. Nicholson (Arabic).
KM	<i>Kashf al-Mahjūb</i> , al-Hujwīrī, tr. R.A. Nicholson.
KMM	<i>Kashf al-Mahjūb</i> , Hujwīrī, ed. V.A. Zhukovsky.
KNJI	<i>Khuddaka Nikaya</i> , tr. John Ireland.
KNTB	<i>Khuddaka Nikaya</i> , tr. Thanissaro Bhikkhu.
KPA	<i>The Koran: With a Parallel Arabic Text</i> , tr. N.J. Dawood.
KRPB	<i>The Kabbalah</i> , Adolph Franck, tr. I. Sussnitz.
KSD1–10	<i>Kullīyāt-i Shams yā Dīvān-i Kabīr</i> , 10 vols., ed. B. Furūzānfar.
KSDS1–2	<i>Kullīyāt-i Shāh Dā‘ī-i Shīrāzī</i> , 2 vols., ed. Maḥmūd Dabīr Siyāqī.
KSS	<i>Kabīr Sākhī Sangrah</i> ; Belvedere.
KSS1–4	<i>Kabīr Sāhib kī Shabdāvalī</i> , 4 vols.; Belvedere.
KSSS	<i>Kullīyāt-i Sa‘dī</i> , Shaykh Muṣliḥ Dīn Sa‘dī Shīrāzī.
KST	<i>Kullīyāt-i Shams-i Tabrīz</i> ; Munshi Naval Kishore.
KSTK	<i>Khulāṣah-i Sharḥ-i Ta‘arruf</i> , ed. Aḥmad ‘Alī Rajā‘ī.
KTJ	<i>Kitāb al-Ta‘rīfāt</i> , al-Jurjānī, ed. ‘Ādil Anwar Khidr.
KTS	<i>Kitāb Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfīyya</i> , Sulamī, Johannes Pedersen.
KWGN	<i>Kabir: The Weaver of God’s Name</i> , V.K. Sethi.
LASZ	<i>Likkutei Amarim: Tanya</i> , Shneur Zalman of Liadi.
LBAP	<i>Leaving the Body</i> , D. Scott Rogo.
LBDF	<i>As Light Before Dawn</i> , Eitan Fishbane.
LBFD	<i>Scripture of the Lotus Blossom of the Fine Dharma</i> , tr. L. Hurvitz.
LDAC	<i>The Ladder of Divine Ascent</i> , John Klimakos, tr. Archimandrite Lazarus.
LDSV	<i>Lame Deer</i> , John (Fire) Lame Deer & Richard Erdoes.

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LDT	<i>Letters of Direction</i> , Abbé de Tourville, tr. Lucy Menzies.
LGFS	<i>The Love of God</i> , St Francis de Sales, tr. Vincent Kerns.
LGMD	<i>Laṭīfah-i Ghaybī</i> , Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Dārābī.
LOSM	<i>Light on Sant Mat</i> , Maharaj Charan Singh.
LPD	<i>A Letter of Private Direction and Other Treatises</i> , tr. J. Griffiths.
LPH	<i>The Ladder of Perfection</i> , Walter Hilton, tr. Leo Sherley Price.
LSMH	“Lower (Second?) Section of the Manichaeon Hymns,” tr. T. Chi.
LSS	<i>The Life of the Servant</i> , Henry Suso, tr. James M. Clark.
LSTJ	<i>The Life of St Teresa of Jesus</i> , tr. D. Lewis, ed. B. Zimmerman.
LTAS	<i>Learning from the Tanya</i> , Adin Steinsaltz, ed. (Hebrew) Meir Hanegbi, tr. E Levine, T. Natkin & Y.D. Shulman.
LTHB	<i>The Life and Teachings of Hillel</i> , Yitzhak Buxbaum.
LTTC	<i>Lao-tzu Te-tao ching</i> , tr. Robert G. Henricks.
LXX	<i>The Septuagint</i> , C3rd–2nd BCE (Greek).
MA	<i>The Master Answers</i> , Maharaj Charan Singh.
MAG	<i>Mishkāṭ al-Anwār</i> , al-Ghazālī.
MARB	<i>Mashrab al-Arwāḥ</i> , Rūzbihān Baqlī, ed. ʿĀsim Ibrāhīm al-Kayālī.
MASA1–2	<i>Manāqib al-ʿĀrifīn</i> , 2 vols., al-Aflākī al-ʿĀrifī, ed. Taḥṣīn Yāzījī.
MBAK	<i>Meditation and the Bible</i> , Aryeh Kaplan.
MBS	<i>Mīrābāī kī Shabdāvalī</i> ; Belvedere.
MD	<i>Mashāriq al-Darārī: Sharḥ-i Tāʿīyah ibn-i Fāriḍ</i> , Saʿīd al-Dīn Saʿīd al-Farghānī, ed. S.J. Āshtiyānī.
MDA	<i>Mohyī al-Dīn ibn ʿArabī</i> , Mohsen Jahangiri.
MDB	<i>Malūkḏās Jī kī Bānī</i> ; Belvedere.
MDBB	<i>Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha</i> , tr. Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli, ed. & rev. Bhikkhu Bodhi.
MDI	<i>Mystical Dimensions of Islam</i> , Annemarie Schimmel.
MEEP	<i>Meister Eckhart</i> , Franz Pfeiffer, tr. C. de B. Evans.
MGK	<i>The Meaning of the Glorious Koran</i> , Marmaduke Pickthall.
MHCP	<i>The Manichaeon Hymn-Cycles in Parthian</i> , tr. M. Boyce.
MHK	<i>Miṣbāḥ al-Hidāyah wa-Miftāḥ al-Kifāyah</i> , ʿIzz al-Dīn Maḥmūd Qāshānī, ed. Jalāl al-Dīn Humāʿī.
MHMI	<i>Mekhilta de Rabbi Ishmael</i> , ed. H.S. Horovitz & I.A. Rabin.
MHN	<i>Morals for the Heart</i> , tr. Bruce Lawrence.
MHVA	<i>Mahāvastu-Avadāna</i> , based on <i>Le Mahāvastu</i> , 3 vols., ed. É. Senart.
MJR1–8	<i>The Mathnawī of Jalāluʿddīn Rūmī</i> , 8 vols., tr. R.A. Nicholson.
MKAK	<i>Meditation and the Kabbalah</i> , Aryeh Kaplan.
ML	<i>Manichaeon Literature</i> , J.P. Asmussen.
MM	<i>Mani and Manichaeism</i> , G. Widengren.
MM1–3	“Mitteliranische Manichaica aus Chinesisch-Turkestan,” 3 vols., F.C. Andreas & W.B. Henning.
MMA	<i>Monk of Mount Athos</i> , Archimandrite Sophrony, tr. R. Edmonds.

MNFA	<i>Muṣībāt Nāmah</i> , Farīd al-Dīn ‘Aṭṭār Nīshābūrī, ed. Nūrānī Viṣāl.
MNTB	<i>Majjhima Nikaya</i> , tr. Thanissaro Bhikkhu.
MOHE	<i>The Mystical Origins of Hasidism</i> , Rachel Elior.
MOI	<i>The Mystics of Islam</i> , R.A. Nicholson.
MPB	<i>A Manichaean Psalm-Book</i> , Part II, tr. C.R.C. Allberry.
MQ	<i>The Mystic Quest</i> , David Ariel.
MR1–6	<i>Maṣnavī Rūmī</i> , 6 vols., ed. Qaṣī Sajjād Husayn.
MSF3	<i>Majmū‘ah-i Muṣannaḡāt-i Shaykh-i Ishrāq</i> , vol. 3, Shihāb al-Dīn Yahyā Suhrawardī, ed. Sayyid Ḥusayn Naṣr.
MSG1–7	<i>Ma‘ārif-i Ṣūfīyah (Gnosis of the Sufis)</i> , 7 vols., Javād Nūrbakhsh.
MSLB	<i>The Maori School of Learning</i> , Elsdon Best.
MSM	<i>Muslim Saints and Mystics</i> , Farid al-Din Attar, tr. A.J. Arberry.
MSMR	<i>Maṣnavī hā-yi Sanā‘ī</i> , ed. Mudarris Raḡawī.
MSSC	<i>Mysticism</i> , Evelyn Underhill.
MTAN	<i>Manṡiq al-Ṭayr, Shaykh ‘Aṭṭār Nīshābūrī</i> , ed. M.R.S. Kadkanī.
MTC1–2	<i>Mother Teresa of Calcutta</i> , 2 parts, Joseph Langford.
MTGS	<i>Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism</i> , Gershom Scholem.
MTIN	<i>Mystic Treatises by Isaac of Nineveh</i> , tr. A.J. Wensinck.
MTP	“The Manichaean-Turkic Poethi-Book,” L.V. Clark.
MUM	<i>Minor Upanishads</i> , tr. Swami Madhavananda.
MUSV	<i>Mahānārāyaṇopaniṣad</i> , tr. Swāmī Vimalānanda.
MVJ1–3	<i>The Mahāvastu</i> , 3 vols., tr. J.J. Jones.
MZBS	<i>Manual of Zen Buddhism</i> , D.T. Suzuki.
NBA1–26	<i>Nueva Biblioteca de Autores Españoles</i> , 26 vols.
NBST	<i>Nārada Bhakti Sūtras</i> , Swāmī Tyāgīśānanda.
NCLL	<i>Names of Christ</i> , Luis de León, tr. M. Duran & W. Kluback.
NDBB	<i>The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha</i> , tr. Bhikkhu Bodhi.
NEEL	<i>No‘am Elimelekh</i> , Elimelekh of Lyzhansk, ed. Gedaliah Nigal.
NEL	<i>Nourishing the Essence of Life</i> , tr. Eva Wong.
NHS11	<i>Nag Hammadi Studies XI</i> , ed. Douglas Parrott.
NHS15	<i>Nag Hammadi Studies XV</i> , ed. Birger Pearson.
NHS20	<i>Nag Hammadi Studies XX</i> , ed. Bentley Layton.
NHS21	<i>Nag Hammadi Studies XXI</i> , ed. Bentley Layton.
NHS22	<i>Nag Hammadi Studies XXII</i> , ed. Harold Attridge.
NHS27	<i>Nag Hammadi Studies XXVII</i> , ed. Douglas Parrott.
NHS30	<i>Nag Hammadi Studies XXX</i> , ed. Birger Pearson.
NHS33	<i>Nag Hammadi Studies XXXIII</i> , ed. M. Waldstein & F. Wisse.
NJB	<i>The New Jerusalem Bible</i> .
NKK1–2	<i>Nānā i ke Kumu</i> , 2 vols., M.K. Pukui, E.W. Haertig & C. Lee.
NPLD	<i>Navapada-Prakaraṇa with Laghu-Vṛtti</i> , Devagupta.
NUJ	<i>Nafahāt al-Uns</i> , ‘Abd al-Raḡmān Jāmī, ed. Mahdī Tawhīdīpūr.
OCM	<i>The Origins of the Christian Mystical Tradition From Plato to Denys</i> , A. Louth.

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ODB	<i>Oxford Dictionary of Buddhism</i> , Damien Keown.
ODS	“Origin & Development of Sufism,” R.A. Nicholson.
OEMV	<i>Oxford Book of English Mystical Verse</i> , ed. D.H.S. Nicholson & A.H.E. Lee.
OHHA	<i>Or ha-Hayyim</i> , Ḥayyim ibn Attar.
OHIA	<i>Oẓar Ḥayyim</i> , Isaac ben Samuel of Akko.
OHTU	<i>Opening the Hand of Thought</i> , Kosho Uchiyama, tr. & ed. Tom Wright, Jisho Warner & Shohaku Okumura.
OIP	<i>Outlines of Indian Philosophy</i> , M. Hiriyanna.
OLP1–5	<i>Obras espirituales del V.P. Luis de la Puente</i> , 5 vols.
OPJ	<i>On the Prayer of Jesus</i> , Ignatius Brianchaninov, tr. Father Lazarus Moore (2006 edn.).
OPJA	<i>On the Prayer of Jesus</i> , Ignatius Brianchaninov, tr. Father Lazarus Moore (1965 edn.).
OSD	<i>The Odes of Solomon</i> , John Davidson.
OSS	<i>Origen</i> , tr. R.P. Lawson.
PA1–7	<i>Plotinus</i> , 7 vols., tr. A.H. Armstrong.
PABM	<i>Projection of the Astral Body</i> , S. Muldoon & H. Carrington.
PAC1–2	<i>The Philosophers</i> , 2 parts, T.A. Richman.
PAGH	<i>The Paradoxical Ascent to God</i> , Rachel Elior, tr. Jeffrey Green.
PCT1–5	<i>The Philokalia</i> , 4 vols., tr. G.E.H. Palmer, P. Sherrard & K. Ware.
PCW1–10	<i>Philo</i> , 10 vols., tr. F.H. Colson & G.H. Whitaker.
PDB	<i>The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism</i> , R. Buswell & D. Lopez.
PDPM	<i>The Path of Discrimination</i> , tr. Bhikkhu Ñānamoli.
PEA	<i>Plato: Euthyphro, Apology, Crito, Phaedo, Phaedrus</i> , tr. H.N. Fowler.
PEBB	<i>Psalms of the Early Buddhists</i> , vol. 2, Mrs Rhys Davids.
PEC	<i>Plotinus (The Enneads)</i> , tr. Stephen MacKenna.
PG1–161	<i>Patrologiae cursus completus ... Series Graeca</i> , 161 vols., ed. J.-P. Migne.
PHI	<i>Prayer and Holiness</i> , Dumitru Staniloae.
PJIB	<i>La Prière de Jésus</i> , tr. Émile Simonod.
PL1–221	<i>Patrologiae cursus completus ... Series Latina</i> , 221 vols., ed. J.-P. Migne.
PMS1–5	<i>Philosophy of the Masters</i> , 5 vols., Huzur Maharaj Sawan Singh.
PPGL	<i>The Practice of the Presence of God</i> , Joseph de Beaufort.
PPL	<i>Plato: Phaedrus and Letters VII and VIII</i> , tr. Walter Hamilton.
PPVM	<i>The Path of Purification</i> , Buddhaghosa, tr. Bhikkhu Ñānamoli.
PS	<i>Pistis Sophia</i> , tr. Violet MacDermot.
PSGG	<i>Pistis Sophia: A Gnostic Gospel</i> , G.R.S. Mead.
PSHC	<i>Physician of the Soul, Healer of the Cosmos</i> , Lawrence Fine.
PSW	<i>The Prodigal Soul</i> , John Davidson.
PTC	<i>Plato: Timaeus and Critias</i> , tr. Desmond Lee.



PTCC	<i>Plato: Timaeus, Critias, Cleitophon, Menexenus, Epistles</i> , tr. R.G. Bury.
PTSA1–6	<i>The Aṅguttara-nikāya</i> , 6 vols., ed. R. Morris & E. Hardy.
PTSD1–3	<i>The Dīgha-nikāya</i> , 3 vols., ed. T.W. Rhys Davids & J.E. Carpenter.
PTSM1–4	<i>The Majjhima-nikāya</i> , 4 vols., ed. V. Trenckner & R. Chalmers.
PTSN	<i>Suttanipāta</i> , ed. D. Anderson & Helmer Smith.
PTSP1–2	<i>Paṭisambhidāmagga</i> , 2 vols., ed. A.C. Taylor.
PTSQ	<i>Milindapañha</i> , ed. V. Trenckner.
PTSS1–6	<i>Samyutta-nikāya</i> , 6 vols., ed. L. Feer.
PTST	<i>Theragāthā and Therīgāthā</i> , ed. H. Oldenberg & R. Pischel.
PTSU	<i>Udāna</i> , ed. P. Steinthal.
PTSV	<i>The Visuddhi-Magga of Buddhaghosa</i> , ed. C.A.F. Rhys Davids.
PU	<i>The Principal Upaniṣads</i> , tr. S. Radhakrishnan.
QAL	<i>Al-Qurʿan</i> , tr. Syed Abdul Latif.
RAAA1–2	<i>Majmūʿah-i Rasāʾil-i Fārsī Khwājah ʿAbd Allāh Anṣārī</i> , 2 vols., ed. Muḥammad Sarūr Mawlāy.
RD	<i>Ravidās Darshan</i> , ed. Achārya Prithvī Singh Āzād.
RDL	<i>Revelations of Divine Love</i> , Julian of Norwich, tr. C. Wolters.
RLRI	<i>Risālah-i Lamʿāt va Risālah-i Iṣṭilāḥāt</i> , ʿIrāqī, ed. J. Nūrbakhsh.
RM	<i>Rabīʿa the Mystic and her Fellow-Saints in Islam</i> , M. Smith.
RMDS	<i>Les Rêves et les moyens de les diriger</i> , D’Hervey de Saint-Denys.
RMI	<i>Readings from the Mystics of Islam</i> , M. Smith.
RMP	<i>A Reader in Manichaeism Middle Persian and Parthian</i> , M. Boyce.
RNNT	<i>Reading Neoplatonism</i> , Sara Rappe.
RNV1–4	<i>Rasāʾil Shāh Nīmatullāhī Valī</i> , 4 vols., ed. Javād Nūrbakhsh.
RPSJ	<i>Reality: Shri Puṣyapada’s Sarvarthasiddhi</i> , tr. S.A. Jain.
RQQQ	<i>Al-Risālah al-Qushayrīyah</i> , al-Qushayrī, ed. M. al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī.
RQR	<i>Risālat al-Quds wa Risālah Ghalaṭāt al-Sālikīn</i> , Rūzbihān Baqlī Shīrāzī, ed. Javād Nūrbakhsh.
RSSP	<i>Ratnakaraṇḍaka Śrāvakācāra</i> , Samantabhadra, ed. J.K. Kishor.
S1–	Numbered manuscripts discovered at Dūnhuáng (China), now in the Stein Collection at The British Library, London (Chinese).
SAAD	<i>Śrāvakācāra</i> , Ācārya Amitagati, ed. Bhagchandra Jain.
SAC	“Shamanism Among the Avá-Chiripá,” Miguel Bartolomé.
SATM	<i>The Shape of Ancient Thought</i> , Thomas McEvilley.
SBAT	<i>Sar Bachan: An Abstract of the Teachings of Soami Ji Maharaj</i> .
SBB	<i>Sahajobāi kī Bānī</i> , Belvedere.
SBE22	<i>Jaina Sutras</i> , Part I, tr. Hermann Jacobi.
SBE35–36	<i>The Questions of King Milinda</i> , 2 vols., tr. T.W. Rhys Davids.
SBE45	<i>Jaina Sutras</i> , Part II, tr. Hermann Jacobi.
SBJP	<i>A Source Book in Jaina Philosophy</i> , D.M. Shastri, tr. T.G. Kalghati.
SBNN	<i>Sūn Bù’èr nǚgōng nèidān cìdishī zhù</i> , Chén Yīngníng.

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SBP	<i>Sār Bachan Chhand-Band (Sār Bachan Poetry)</i> , Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh.
SBPS	<i>Sar Bachan Poetry (Selections)</i> , Soami Shiv Dayal Singh.
SCJS	<i>Sīmǎ Chéngzhēn jǐjǐào</i> , Wú Shòujū.
SDAM	<i>Sāgāra-dharmāmṛta</i> , Āśādhara.
SDBS	“Shekhinah,” <a href="http://digital-brilliance.com/themes/shekhinah.php">digital-brilliance.com/themes/shekhinah.php</a> .
SDFE	“A Study of Dreams,” Frederik van Eeden.
SDT1–4	<i>Shōbōgenzō</i> , 4 vols., tr. Gudo Wafu Nishijima & Chodo Cross.
SER	<i>The Spiritual Espousals</i> , Jan van Ruysbroeck, tr. Eric Colledge.
SERM	<i>Seder Eliyyahu Rabbah</i> , ed. Meir Friedmann.
SFH	<i>Sharḥ-i Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam</i> , Dāʿūd al-Qayṣārī.
SG	<i>Spiritual Gems</i> , Maharaj Sawan Singh Ji.
SGFC	<i>The Secret of the Golden Flower</i> , tr. Thomas Cleary.
SGFW	<i>The Secret of the Golden Flower</i> , tr. & expl. R. Wilhelm.
SGR	<i>Mafātīḥ al-ʾIjāz fī Sharḥ-i Gulshan-i Rāz-i Maḥmūd Shabistarī</i> , Shaykh Muḥammad Lāhijī, ed. Kayvān Samīʿ.
SHI	<i>The Spiritual Heritage of India</i> , Swami Prabhavananda.
SIM	<i>Studies in Islamic Mysticism</i> , R.A. Nicholson.
SJCC	<i>Sravakacara</i> , B.K. Khadabadi.
SKDC	<i>Dion Chrysostomos oder Vom Leben nach seinem Vorbild</i> , Synesios von Kyrene, tr. Kurt Treu.
SKHV	<i>Shaʿarei Kedushah</i> , Ḥayyim Vital; British Museum Ms. 749.
SKHZ	<i>Shaʿarei Kedushah</i> , Ḥayyim Vital; <a href="http://dailyzohar.com">dailyzohar.com</a> .
SKS	<i>Self-Knowledge (Atmabodha)</i> , tr. Swami Nikhilananda.
SMA	<i>Ṣad Maydān</i> , Khwājah ʿAbd Allāh Anṣārī, ed. Qāsim Anṣārī.
SMHV	<i>Shaʿar ha-Miṣvot</i> , Ḥayyim Vital, ed. Yehuda Ashlag.
SMIK1–13	<i>The Sufi Message of Hazrat Inayat Khan</i> , 13 vols.
SNPM	<i>Secret Native American Pathways</i> Thomas Mails.
SNVF	<i>The Sutta-Nipāta: A Collection of Discourses</i> , tr. V. Fausböll.
SOA	<i>Sufis of Andalusia</i> , tr. R.W.J. Austin.
SPK	<i>The Sufi Path of Knowledge</i> , William Chittick.
SPL	<i>The Sufi Path of Love</i> , William Chittick.
SPM	<i>The Sacrament of the Present Moment</i> , J.-P. de Caussade, tr. K. Muggeridge.
SRK1–5	<i>Sri Sri Ramakrishna Kathamrita</i> , 5 vols., Mahendra Nath Gupta.
SRSS	<i>Aparokshānubhūti or Self Realization of Sri Sankaracharya</i> , tr. Swami Vimuktananda.
SSE1–15	<i>Sufi Symbolism: The Nurbakhsh Encyclopedia of Sufi Terminology</i> , 15 vols., Dr Javad Nurbakhsh, tr. T. Graham <i>et al</i> .
SSI1–10	<i>Sacred Songs of India</i> , 10 vols., V.K. Subramanian.
SSJR	<i>The Adornment of the Spiritual Marriage, The Sparkling Stone, The Book of Supreme Truth</i> , John of Ruysbroeck, tr. C.A. Wynschenk.



SSJV	<i>Samaṇ Suttaṃ</i> , comp. Jinēndra Varṇī, tr. T.K. Tukol & K.K. Dixit.
SSKK	<i>Samayasara</i> , Shri Kunda Kunda Acharya, tr. J.L. Jaini.
SSM1–3	<i>Studies of the Spanish Mystics</i> , 3 vols., E. Allison Peers.
SSR	<i>Shrī Sant Rohidās</i> , Ashok Prabhākar Kāmat.
SSRF	<i>Safed Spirituality</i> , tr. Lawrence Fine.
SSSE	<i>The Song of Songs of Solomon</i> , Madame Guyon, tr. J. Metcalf.
SSTK	<i>Seven Steps to the Tao</i> , Livia Kohn.
SSV	<i>The Siva Samhita</i> , tr. Rai Bahadur Srisa Chandra Vasu.
SSYE	<i>Sha'arei ha-Sod ha-Yiḥud ve-ha-'Eminah</i> , Ele'azar ben Judah of Worms, ed. Joseph Dan.
STE1–3	<i>Sermons &amp; Treatises</i> , 3 vols., Meister Eckhart, tr. M. O'C. Walshe.
SWP	<i>Select Works of Plotinus</i> , tr. Thomas Taylor.
SWT	<i>A Study of Wisdom</i> , tr. Clifton Wolters.
T1–100	<i>Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō</i> , 100 vols., ed. Takakusu Junjirō & Watanabe Kaigokyu.
TACD	<i>The Teachings of Ajahn Chah</i> , Ajahn Chah.
TAN1–2	<i>Tadhkiratu 'l-Awliya</i> , 2 parts, ed. R.A. Nicholson.
TBEE	<i>Tanna Debe Eliyyahu</i> , tr. William Braude & Israel Kapstein.
TBLD	<i>The Long Discourses of the Buddha</i> , tr. Maurice Walshe.
TBT	<i>Tahrīr al-Bayān fī Taqrīr Shu'ab al-Īmān</i> , al-Qūnawī.
TCBB	<i>Teachings of the Compassionate Buddha</i> , ed. E.A. Burtt.
TCC1–4	<i>The Taoist Classics</i> , 4 vols., Thomas Cleary.
TDK	<i>A Testament of Devotion</i> , Thomas Kelly.
TGH1–3	<i>Thrice-Greatest Hermes</i> , 3 vols., G.R.S. Mead.
TGLE	<i>Tao, The Great Luminant</i> , tr. Evan Morgan.
TGTD	<i>The Teachings of Goswami Tulsidas</i> , K.N. Upadhyaya.
TIVU	<i>The Taoist Inner View of the Universe and the Immortal Realm</i> , Ni Hua-Ching.
TMLT	<i>Taoist Meditation and Longevity Techniques</i> , ed. Livia Kohn.
TMNM	<i>Al-Tibr al-Masbūk fī Naṣīḥat al-Mulūk</i> , Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī.
TMPS	<i>Taoist Mystical Philosophy</i> , Livia Kohn.
TMU	<i>Thirty Minor Upaniṣads</i> , tr. K. Narayanasvami Aiyar.
TOS	<i>Tayyibat</i> , tr. Lucas White King.
TPBW	<i>Therigatha</i> , tr. Charles Hallisey.
TPEQ	<i>The Teachings and Practices of the Early Quanzhen Taoist Masters</i> , Stephen Eskildsen.
TPSN	<i>The Three Pure Land Sutras</i> , tr. H. Inagaki with H. Stewart.
TPZK	<i>The Three Pillars of Zen</i> , comp. & ed. Philip Kapleau.
TQH	<i>Tamhīdāt</i> , 'Ayn al-Quḍat Hamadānī, ed. 'Afīf 'Usayrān.
TRAK	<i>Tohunga – The Revival</i> , Samuel Timoti Robinson.
TS	<i>The Teachings of Silvanus</i> , J. Zandee.
TSAA	<i>Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfīyah</i> , Khwājah 'Abd Allāh Anṣārī, ed. A.H. Ḥabībī.
TSR	<i>The Triumphal Sun</i> , Annemarie Schimmel.

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TSSW	<i>Through a Speculum That Shines</i> , Elliot R. Wolfson.
TT1–2	<i>The Texts of Taoism</i> , 2 vols., tr. James Legge.
TTCC	<i>The Tao Te Ching</i> , tr. Ellen M. Chen.
TTCW	<i>Tao Te Ching</i> , Lao Tzu, tr. John C.H. Wu.
TTEP	<i>Taoist Texts</i> , tr. Frederic Balfour.
TTT1–10	“Türkische Turfantexte,” 10 parts, W. Bang, A. von Gabain, T. Kowalski, G.R. Rachmati, W. Winter <i>et al.</i>
TTWC	<i>The Way of Lao Tzu (Tao-te ching)</i> , tr. Wing-tsit Chan.
TVW1–5	<i>The Treatise on the Great Virtue of Wisdom of Nāgārjuna</i> , 5 vols., tr. Étienne Lamotte & Gelongma Karma Migme Chödrön.
TYPY	<i>The Textbook of Yoga Psychology</i> , Rammurti Mishra.
TZC	<i>Two Zen Classics</i> , tr. K. Sekida, ed. A.V. Grimstone.
U1–4	<i>The Upanishads</i> , 4 vols., tr. Swami Nikhilananda.
UCRM	<i>Religio Medici</i> , Thomas Browne.
UVPP	<i>Ācārya Umāsvāti Vācaka’s Praśamaratiprakaraṇa</i> , tr. Y.S. Shastri.
VCRD	<i>Vibhaṅga</i> , ed. C.A.F. Rhys Davids.
VCSM	<i>Viveka-cūḍāmaṇi of Śrī Śaṅkarācārya</i> , tr. Swāmī Mādhavānanda.
VCST	<i>Vivekacūḍāmaṇi of Śrī Śaṅkarācārya</i> , tr. Svāmī Turīyānanda.
VFWW	<i>Vedanta for the Western World</i> , ed. Christopher Isherwood.
VIAF	<i>The Book of Visions and Instructions of Blessed Angela of Foligno</i> , tr. A.P.J. Cruikshank.
VME1–2	<i>Vida (Life) and Other Works</i> , 2 vols., Marina de Escobar.
VSU	<i>Vedāntasāra of Sadānanda Yogindra</i> , tr. Swami Nikhilananda.
WBC1–4	<i>The Works of Bernard of Clairvaux: On the Song of Songs</i> , 4 vols., tr. K. Walsh (vols. 1–3) & I.M. Edmonds (vols. 3–4).
WBOB	<i>The Word of the Buddha</i> , tr. & expl. Nyanatiloka Mahāthera.
WCTM	<i>The Way of Chuang Tzu</i> , tr. Thomas Merton.
WH10	<i>Sakka’s Quest: Sakka-pañhā Sutta</i> , tr. Sister Vajira.
WH1–464	<i>Wheel (Magazine)</i> ; Buddhist Publication Society.
WLT	<i>The Wisdom of Lao-tse</i> , tr. Lin Yutang.
WPJ1–4	<i>The Works of Philo Judaeus</i> , 4 vols., tr. C.D. Yonge.
WPW	<i>The Way of a Pilgrim</i> , tr. R.M. French.
WRHS	<i>The World’s Religions</i> , Huston Smith.
WTM1–3	<i>With the Three Masters</i> , 3 vols., Rai Sahib Munshi Ram.
XB1–23	<i>Dào-zàng xùbiān</i> , 23 titles in 4 vols., ed. Mǐn Yīdé.
YICH	<i>Yasastilaka and Indian Culture</i> , Krishna Kanta Handiqui.
YSHG	<i>The Yoga Shastra of Hemachandracharya</i> , tr. A.S. Gopani.
ZTMP	<i>Zen Training: Methods and Philosophy</i> , Katsuki Sekida.
ZW1–991	<i>Zángwài dàooshū</i> , 991 titles in 36 vols.

8.1 STATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS,  
FORMS OF KNOWLEDGE  
(INNER PEACE AND LOVE – VIJÑĀNA)



**inner peace and love (Native North American)** Like probably all other spiritual traditions, Native Americans speak of an innate inner peace and love that is available to everyone. In the case of Native Americans, they see this as a gift from the *Wakan-Tanka* (Great Spirit). Frank Fools Crow of the Lakota Sioux (c.1890–1989) says:

The wise old ones among my people were taught in the beginning that inner peace and love are the greatest of *Wakan-Tanka*'s gifts. No matter what else has gone on, the tribal elders have lived by this teaching and have not let the rest of the people forget it. We know there can be no lasting or worthwhile happiness without inner peace and love. With these we walk in a warm relationship with *Wakan-Tanka*, and we put the well-being of other people and of all of nature first. We cling to this like a person clings to a raft on a roaring river. We know no fear, and our inner selves are serene. That is what I was taught, and it is what I have lived by.

I have never hurt or hated another person, and I have never needed excitement or liquor to make life worthwhile. Whatever I had was always enough, and whatever happened, I never felt that *Wakan-Tanka* treated me unjustly. I have followed the pathways of inner peace and love, and I have found that the flowers and trees that line these ways and the sun, moon, and seasons above and around them are my teachers. The spirits in the four directions are my main helpers – that is why the coloured smoke comes to me and passes through me – and the spirits of the creatures who dwell along the pathways are my other helpers. Anyone who follows these same pathways can have the same inner peace and love I have, as well as the powers that come with them.

*Frank Fools Crow, in Secret Native American Pathways, SNPM p.6*

**inner silence, interior silence** Inner peace and tranquillity; inner stillness (Gk. *hēsychia*); the stillness of a mind absorbed in contemplation; contrasted with the otherwise constant chatter of the mind.

Pérez de Valdivia writes that such interior silence is a companion of contemplation:

He contemplates who, with clear and still regard and in quietude, and a kind of interior silence, and with holy wonder, and almost without reasoning, is looking intimately at the things of God.

*Pérez de Valdivia, Road and Door to Prayer, in DSPV fol.131rv, in SSM3 p.109*

Writing that the Jesus prayer should be practised in solitude and silence, Alexander d'Agapeyeff interprets both interiorly. Solitude, he says, includes

both some degree of physical solitude, as well as an inner solitude of the soul with God. Of silence, he continues:

Silence here is meant to include inner silence; the silence of one's own mind, the arresting of the imagination from the ever-turbulent and ever-present stream of thoughts, words, impressions, pictures and daydreams, which keep one (spiritually) asleep. This is not easy, as the mind works almost autonomously, much in the same way as do the digestive contractions of one's intestines, of which one is not even aware.

*Alexander d'Agapeyeff, Introduction, in OPIA pp.11–12*

Kallistos Ware explains that this inner silence is a state of passive receptivity to God:

By silence or stillness is meant, in this context, not emptiness but fullness, not an absence but a presence. True silence of the heart is an attitude of waiting upon God, of listening to Him, of responding to His love. It is not just the cessation of speech, a pause between words, but rather communion and dialogue. "This silence," says Ignatius (Brianchaninov), "is at the same time a conversation, yet without thoughts, above every thought."<sup>1</sup>

*Kallistos Ware, Foreword, in OPJ p.xxxi*

Many mystics have exhibited a mystical tendency from an early age. The Bishop Ignatius Brianchaninov, for example, quoted by Kallistos Ware, recalls that as a teenager, inner silence had been his constant companion:

At fifteen, an ineffable silence reigned in my spirit and my heart, but I did not understand this; I thought it was the usual condition of everyone.

*Ignatius Brianchaninov, On the Prayer of Jesus, OPJ p.ix*

However, enrolled at that age by his aristocratic father at an army school in St Petersburg, he recalls that his inner peace then deserted him for some while, leaving him desolate and in a spiritual vacuum:

In my soul, I felt a void that grew continually. A thirst and an unquenchable yearning for God overwhelmed me. . . . I wept over my loss of the sweetness of silence, I lamented over the void that I had discovered and that crushed me, terrified me, filled as I was with the sense of being an orphan, a creature deprived of life.

*Ignatius Brianchaninov, On the Prayer of Jesus, OPJ p.x*

At the age of twenty, he came first in his final examinations, and was given a commission in the army, a post that he soon resigned, to begin his life as a monk in the Orthodox Church.

The young Brianchaninov, unschooled in the disciplines of interior prayer may have lost his inner peace for some years; for the spiritually mature, however, inner silence is a state of mind that can be enjoyed even when surrounded by others. As Archimandrite Sophrony recalls of his mentor, the Staretz Silouan:

I once asked the *staretz*, “Doesn’t being steward and having to live among so many people make inner silence difficult?”

“What does inner silence mean?” he replied. “It means ceaseless prayer, with the mind dwelling in God. Father John of Kronstadt was always surrounded by people, yet he was more with God than many solitaries. I became steward in an act of obedience blessed by the Abbot, so I pray better at my task than I prayed at Old Rossikon where I asked to go for the sake of inner silence. If the soul loves and pities the people, prayer is not interrupted.”

*Archimandrite Sophrony, Monk of Mount Athos, MMA p.44*

See also: **hēsychia**, **silence** (8.5), **stillness**, **tranquillity**.

1. Ignatius Brianchaninov, *The Pilgrim*, in *PJIB* p.142 (n.2).

**inspiration** An impulse or energy to undertake a particular course of action or to create some literary, musical, or artistic work; an impulse bestowed by God upon a prophet or religious teacher, or upon the author of sacred literature; spiritually, an inner impulse that leads the mind and soul towards the Divine; an indrawing of the mind and soul towards God; an influx of divine grace; spiritual awakening, illumination, or revelation; also, spiritual strength and encouragement stimulated by some source, such as a person or a book.

Walter Hilton observes that divine inspiration is always available:

We should desire always to be conscious – so far as we may – of the lively inspiration of grace brought about by the spiritual presence of God within our souls.

*Walter Hilton, Ladder of Perfection 2:41, LPH p.233*

The soul, writes the Abbé de Tourville, is “saturated” with “His inspiration”:

Our true light and power lie in the hidden source of interior grace in which God springs up ceaselessly within our souls. The soul is

saturated with God's own life, His presence, His activity, His inspiration, His encouragement, and the radiance of His presence.

*Abbé de Tourville, Letters of Direction 16, LDT p.84*

François de Sales, who also regards inner promptings as inspirations, has much to say on the subject:

By inspirations we mean all those interior attractions, movements of the heart, pangs of conscience and illuminations of the mind by which God, in His fatherly love and care, quickens our hearts with His blessings, to awaken, stir, urge and attract us to virtue, charity and good resolutions, in fact to everything that serves our eternal good. This is what is meant in the *Song of Songs* by the beloved knocking at the door, speaking to the heart of his spouse, awaking her when she sleeps, calling for her when she is absent, inviting her to eat his honey and gather apples and flowers in his garden, to sing and let her sweet voice sound in his ears.<sup>1</sup>

*François de Sales, Devout Life 2:18; cf. IDL pp.76–77*

However, he advises caution in accepting everything that comes in the guise of such “inspiration”. It could just be the activity of one's mind:

Before you consent to inspirations concerning important or extraordinary matters, seek the advice of your confessor, that he may examine whether they are true or false and so preserve you from deception; for the devil often sends false inspirations to deceive those who receive them readily, but he can never deceive those who humbly obey their confessor.

*François de Sales, Devout Life 2:18, IDL p.78*

Likewise, counsels Jean-Pierre de Caussade:

Intuition and inspiration are . . . the intimations of God's will and it is best for souls to obey them, not forgetting, however, the caution required when doing so.

*J.-P. de Caussade, Sacrament of the Present Moment 8, SPM p.77*

Even so, says François de Sales, essential inspiration is a divine impulse:

Inspiration, like an angel from heaven, strikes the sinner's heart, prompting him to rise from his sinfulness.

Surely it is a fact, . . . that this first emotion, this jolt which the soul feels, when God prompts it with His loving inspirations to awake from sin and come back to Him, is ours, for our sakes, yet none of our doing!



We awaken, but not by ourselves; inspiration wakes us by its impulse, its jolt. . . . God awakens us with a start, unexpectedly, by the call of His inspiration. We do nothing, in these early stages of grace, but feel the impulse “which is God operating in us,” as St Bernard says, “but without our co-operation”.

*François de Sales, Love of God 2:9, LGFS p.73*

However, the inspiration breathed into the soul by God is magnified by the soul’s willingness to be inspired:

Inspiration, . . . like a wind from heaven, comes to lift us into the atmosphere of love. It catches our wills, moves them by a feeling of heavenly delight, unfolding and spreading their natural tendency towards good, in such a way that it gains a hold on the soul through that natural tendency.

Now all this . . . is done by God operating in us without our co-operation – the grace of God prompting us. Should the soul, once it is aware of the wind of God’s grace stirring its natural tendency, contribute (however slightly) its consent to that impulse – what a stroke of good fortune! The activity of inspiration, of grace, combines with our consent, lends strength to our weak efforts; gives life to our feeble co-operation by its own powerful operation, helping, guiding, keeping us company from love to love, until we make that act of faith which conversion demands.

God alone knows what a comfort it is for us to reflect on the way in which the Holy Spirit pours out into hearts the first rays, the first impulses of his light, of his love!

*François de Sales, Love of God 2:13; cf. LGFS pp.82–83*

Divine inspiration is what gives life to a soul dulled by material existence:

The sun’s rays give both light and warmth together. Inspiration is a ray of grace bringing light and warmth to our hearts: light to show us what is good; warmth to give us energy to go after it. All living things in this world are numbed by winter’s cold; with the return of spring’s warmth they come to life again – animals move more swiftly, birds fly higher with livelier song, plants gaily bud and blossom. Without inspiration, the life of the soul is sluggish, impotent, useless. Once the rays of God’s inspirations strike it, however, we are aware of light and life – our minds are enlightened, our wills inflamed and quickened with strength to intend and fulfil whatever may lead to our salvation. . . .

The . . . eternal God breathes, infuses into our souls the inspirations of the spiritual life, so that . . . they became living souls. . . .

Man's breath warms the things it enters, . . . God's breath, however, not merely warms, but enlightens to perfection. The Holy Spirit is infinite light; he is the living breath we call inspiration. Through His Spirit, God breathes into us, inspires us with the desires or intentions of His heart. . . .

Blessed are those whose hearts are ever open to God's inspiration; they will never lack what they need to live good holy lives. . . . If we offer no obstacle to grace – He gives each of us the inspirations needed for life, activity, and self-preservation on the spiritual level.

*François de Sales, Love of God 8:10, LGFS pp.340–42*

See also: **prophet** (7.1), **revelation**.

1. *Song of Songs* 2:3, 10, 13–14, 5:1–2, etc.

**interior castle** (Spanish, *castillo interior*) The interior life of the soul; a term used by the Spanish mystic, Teresa of Ávila, in her book *Las Moradas* ('The Mansions') or *Castillo Interior*, written in 1577, and commonly known in English as the *Interior Castle*. The expression appears in the heading of each of the book's seven sections, in which she describes the soul's ascent to God. The Spanish title of her book is drawn from Jesus' saying:

In my Father's house are many mansions:  
if it were not so, I would have told you.

*John 14:2, KJV*

In St Teresa's thought, the seven 'mansions' represent seven stages of the interior life and the soul's ascent from the most fundamental beginnings on the purgative way to the heights of divine union. The seven mansions consist of three preparatory mansions, wherein the soul is occupied with vocal and mental prayer, discursive meditation (*i.e.* reflection), and the virtuous life; one mansion of spiritual consolations, in which the soul passes from the prayer of recollection to the prayer of quiet, these stages being the beginning of the true contemplative life; and three mansions in which the soul experiences increasing union with God, these being the prayer of union, the spiritual betrothal, and finally the spiritual marriage.

As St Teresa writes in her prologue, the book was written especially for her cloistered sisters:

Considering how strictly you are cloistered, my sisters, how few opportunities you have of recreation and how insufficient in number are your houses, I think it will be a great consolation for you, in some

of your convents, to take your delight in this interior castle, for you can enter it and walk about in it at any time without asking leave from your superiors.

It is true that, however strong you think yourselves, you cannot enter all the mansions by your own efforts: the Lord of the castle Himself must admit you to them. So, if you meet with any resistance, I advise you not to make any effort to get in, for if you do you will displease Him so much that He will never admit you. He is a great lover of humility. If you consider yourselves unworthy of entering even the third mansion, He will more quickly give you the will to reach the fifth, and thenceforward you may serve Him by going to these mansions again and again, till He brings you into the mansion which He reserves as His own and which you will never leave, except when you are called away by the prioress, whose wishes this great Lord is pleased that you should observe as if they were His own. And even if, at her command, you are often outside these mansions, He will always keep the door open against your return. Once you have been shown how to enjoy this Castle, you will find rest in everything, even in the things which most try you, and you will cherish a hope of returning to it which nobody can take from you.

*Teresa of Ávila, Interior Castle 7:4, CWT2 pp.350–51*

See also: **prayer of quiet, prayer of recollection, prayer of union, spiritual betrothal, spiritual marriage, way of purgation (★4).**

**intibāh** (A), **intibāt** (P) *Lit.* waking from sleep; vigilance, wakefulness, mindfulness, heedfulness, alertness; recognition; in Sufism, spiritual wakefulness, absence of distraction, awareness of the presence of the Divine; “departure of heedlessness from the heart”;<sup>1</sup> “emergence from the confines of heedlessness”;<sup>2</sup> listed by Bākhārzī as the first of fourteen stations (*maqāmāt*) on the Sufi path, rising from *intibāt* to *ikhlās* (pure sincerity).<sup>3</sup>

Rūzbihān defines *intibāh* as awakening from the sleep of material existence when the inner eyes see the “light of the Unseen”:

Heedfulness (*intibāh*) follows awakening (*yaqāzah*). It refers to the opening of the eyes of the innermost consciousness (*sirr*) by the light of the Unseen, after becoming continually aware of the baseness of the lower mind (*nafs*). At this point, one seeks to recover those essential characteristics that had previously been lost.

The gnostic (al-Ḥallāj) said, “Whenever the light of grace appears in the heart of the sinner, heedfulness (*intibāh*) soon follows.”

*Rūzbihān, Mashrab al-Arwāh 1:46, MARB p.25; cf. in SSE10 p.3*

Jurjānī similarly describes *intibāh* as an awakening brought about by God:

Heedfulness (*intibāh*) signifies God's penetrating reproach of the wayfarer, which arouses him and fires him with gladness, breaking the bonds of arrogance and heedlessness (*ghaflah*) by means of the divine grace that comes with it.

*Jurjānī, Ta'rīfāt, KTJ p.40; cf. in SSE10 p.3*

Rūmī observes that even a "blessing" of divine grace can scatter the mind if it is not received with gratitude. Gratitude creates an indrawing of the mind, which leads to a state of heedfulness:

A blessing (*ni'mat*) produces heedlessness (*ghaflat*),  
and thanksgiving (*shukr*) heedfulness (*intibāh*);  
Hunt the blessing with the snare of thanksgiving to the King.  
The gift of thanksgiving  
will make you contented and princely,  
so that you will bestow a hundred blessings on the poor.

*Rūmī, Maṣnavī III:2897–98; cf. MJR4 p.162*

See also: **ghaflah** (6.2).

1. Hujwīrī, *Kashf al-Maḥjūb* XXIV, KMM p.500, KM p.385.
2. Bākhazī, *Fuṣūṣ al-Ādāb*, AAF2 p.51; cf. in SSE10 p.3.
3. Bākhazī, *Fuṣūṣ al-Ādāb*, AAF2 pp.51–52, in HSL2 pp.302–3.

**intoxication, inebriation** Spiritually, the overwhelming ecstasy and sweetness of contact with the Divine; also qualified as spiritual intoxication, inebriation, or drunkenness; also, intoxication with the material world – its activities and pleasures; also, metaphorically, the state of being carried away with oneself, with one's own 'wisdom' or 'goodness', one's skill with words, rhetoric, or preaching, and so on.

The metaphor often appears in Christian commentaries on verses from the biblical *Song of Songs*, such as, "Your love is more delightful than wine,"<sup>1</sup> "He has taken me to his banquet hall,"<sup>2</sup> and so on. Similarly, "my cup overflows" of the twenty-third psalm is understood to imply spiritual intoxication:

"My cup overflows" signifies a draught of inner sweetness, intoxicating my soul with love for my Maker, such that I rest secure, turned completely from the love of temporal things. And so with sweetness am I led on to glorious eternity, feeling neither earthly happiness nor

distress. . . . I believe that there is no joy to compare with this, for it intoxicates with pure sweetness, and delights with holy charm. . . . Love is a spiritual wine, intoxicating the minds of the elect, making them bold and manly, so that they forget the poisonous delight of the world.

*Richard Rolle, Fire of Love 36, 41; cf. FLML (2:6, 11) pp.155–56, 184, 187, FLRR pp.160–61, 184, 187*

Likewise, the “Living Water” of the divine Word, as depicted in John’s gospel,<sup>3</sup> is described as spiritually intoxicating:

And Speaking Waters touched my lips  
 from the Lord’s Spring, plenteously.  
 And I drank and was intoxicated  
 with the Living Water that does not die.  
 And my intoxication caused no heedlessness:  
 Rather, I abandoned selfhood,  
 and turned towards the Most High, my God,  
 and was enriched by His gift.

*Odes of Solomon 11:6–9, OSD p.50*

In the gnostic *Gospel of Thomas*, Jesus tells his disciples that their real master is not himself, but this same Spring of Living Water, the mystic Word:

Jesus said:  
 “I am not your master, for you have drunk and become intoxicated  
 from the bubbling Spring that I have measured out.”

*Gospel of Thomas 35:13; cf. GS p.382, NHS20 pp.58–59*

Intoxication with the “Living Streams” is again a metaphor used by the unknown writer of the *Book of the Poor in Spirit*:

When a man enters this field where these Living Streams burst forth, he opens his mouth and drinks – drinks so much that he is intoxicated with joy. He can no longer control himself under this overwhelming rapture. . . . More and more he seeks for the original Source of these Springs until at last he finds it hidden in the heart of God. And there he drinks the secret Wisdom of God which no one knows except the person who has received it.

*Book of the Poor in Spirit 4:2.3, BPSG pp.202–3*

As François de Sales points out, such intoxication is very different from the intoxication of wine:

Contemplation . . . is a kind of drinking: it is easy and natural, pleasant and smooth; but contemplation that is frequent and fervent, that takes one out of self to God, has an intoxicating effect. Blessed intoxication! – unlike drinking too much wine, it leaves us physically, not spiritually senseless. It does not stupefy or brutalize, but renders us angelic and, as it were, deifies us. It takes us out of ourselves, not to abase us to the level of beasts, but to lift us above ourselves, set us with the angels. And it does this to make us more alive to God than to ourselves, lovingly intent on the vision of His beauty, lovingly bent on union with His goodness.

*François de Sales, Love of God 6:6, LGFS p.235*

See also: **drunkenness** (6.2).

1. *Song of Songs* 1:2, *JB*.
2. *Song of Songs* 2:4, *JB*.
3. *John* 4:10–11, 7:38.

**īqān** (A/P) *Lit.* making certain (*yaqīn*); assurance, certitude, sure faith; one of the stages (*maqāmāt*) of the spiritual journey. The *Kubrāwīyah* school of Sufism, for instance, described six stages of spiritual development: *īmān* (faith), *iḥsān* (beneficence), *īṭmi'nān* (tranquillity), *īqān* (certitude), *irfān* (gnosis), and finally *hayamān* (bewilderment). Some Sufis have also described *īqān* as the stage where a mystic finds that every atom of the universe is pervaded with divine Being.

Jurjānī says that “certitude” concerning something is generally arrived at through an intellectual process, but that this does not apply to God:

Certitude (*īqān*) about something represents knowledge of the reality thereof, acquired after examination and inference. By the same token, it is evident that God cannot be described with certitude (*yaqīn*).

*Jurjānī, Ta'rīfāt, KTJ p.43, in SSE15 p.67*

Rūmī says that this “certitude” arises from mystical experience in one who is “liberated” from the “illusion” of this world:

The man of certitude (*īqān*) is liberated from imagination and illusion:  
he does not mistake a hair of the eyebrow for the crescent moon.

*Rūmī, Maśnavī V:2657; cf. MJR6 p.160*

He also says that if the human intellect can offer proofs, then the Universal Intellect or Intellect of intellect – both terms for the divine creative power –

must of necessity have complete “certitude” and knowledge of all things, for it keeps the “whole universe” in existence:

When the intellect (‘aql), the husk, can offer a hundred proofs,  
how could the Universal Intellect (‘Aql-i Kull)  
ever take a step without certitude (īqān)?

The intellect (‘aql) makes books entirely black (with writing):  
the Intellect of intellect (‘Aql-i ‘aql) keeps the whole universe  
filled with light from the moon of Reality.

It is free from black and white:  
the light of its moon shines upon heart and soul.

*Rūmī, Maṣnāvī III:2530–32; cf. MJR4 p.142*

See also: **yaqīn**.

**‘irfān** (A/P) *Lit.* cognition, knowledge; gnosis, realization; direct, personal mystic knowledge acquired by inner experience; from the same root as ‘araḥ (to know, to recognize, to perceive, to be cognizant of, to be aware of, to be acquainted with), and ma‘rifah (gnosis, knowledge of God). Most Sufis have understood ‘irfān as purely experiential in nature:

The *ṣūfī* interpretation of ‘irfān is gnosis (ma‘rifat), founded upon an indescribable spiritual state (*ḥālāt*) in which a personal, direct relationship with the absolute Being is experienced. This state, being beyond limit or description, is the conscious realization (‘irfān) by a gnostic (‘arīf) of the divine, absolute Essence, through zeal and fervour, not intellect and reasoning.

*‘Abd al-Ḥusayn Zarrīn Kōb, Arzish-i Mīrās-i Ṣūfīyah, AMZ p.10*

Javād Nūrbakhsh says that this experience was not a Muslim innovation, but existed in pre-Islamic Iran:

Fundamentally, gnosis (‘irfān) involves illumination of heart, so that one experiences the realities of things as they truly are. It is attained through ascetic discipline, visionary disclosure, and contemplative vision. Far from being an innovation of Islam, this cognition existed in Iran long before Islam, as well as among a number of other nations and peoples. In the *Dabistān al-Madhāhib*, it states that by all accounts the *ṣūfī* and the mystic (‘arīf) enjoyed a special inward practice, illumination of heart, and unity of vision in Iran before Islam.

As I see it, among the expressions of pre-Islamic gnosis was the school of the Khusravian philosophers and the circle of the Pahlavian

sages. The *shaykh* of illumination (Shihāb al-Dīn Yaḥyā Suhrawardī, d. 1191 CE) in his dissertations and discussions made it clear that he considered himself a follower of their path.

It was not until six centuries after the coming of Islam that someone like Suhrawardī came along to bring out this tradition; and the source of his information, as far as I have been able to determine on the basis of my researches, was the city of Iṣfahān with its circle of scholars. The school of Iṣfahān itself arose well after the death of Suhrawardī.

Its later adherent Ḥājī Mullā Hādī Sabzavārī states in a verse:

For the Pahlavians, existence is the reality of the Essence  
manifesting forth in emanated levels.

*Javād Nūrbakhsh, Sufi Symbolism, FNI15 pp.135–36; cf. SSE15 p.126*

Lāhijī says that, in his opinion, *‘irfān* can be attained not only through spiritual practice but also through learned study, a viewpoint with which not all Sufis would agree:

Gnosis (*‘irfān*) means cognition of God (*shanākhat-i Haqq*), being one of the divine sciences (*‘ulūm-i Ilāhī*) involving cognition of God (*ma‘rifat*) and of His Names and Attributes. Gnosis (*‘irfān*) of God may be attained in one of two ways:

The first is through reasoning, where, from the evidence of Effects, one deduces the Provider of those Effects, or one may work from Acts to Attributes, or from Attributes to the Essence. This is particularly the approach of the learned doctors.

The second is through inward purification, purging the inner consciousness (*sirr*) of everything other than God and adorning the spirit. This is the approach particular to the prophets, friends of God, and mystics (*‘urafā’*). Gnosis involves an unveiling (*kashf*) and contemplative vision (*shuhūd*) that is accessible only to one who is rapt in attraction to the Absolute, and this can be attained only through devotional practice in body, *nafs*, heart, spirit, inner consciousness (*sirr*), and innermost consciousness (*khaṭī*) with the aim of establishing the domain of visionary cognition (*ma‘rifat-i shuhūdī*).

*Lāhijī, Sharḥ-i Gulshan-i Rāz, SGR pp.7–8; cf. in SSE15 pp.125–26*

See also: **gnōsis**, **ishrāq**, **ma‘rifah**.

**ishrāq** (A/P) *Lit.* illumination; sunrise; in Sufism, an experience of the inner light. The term is used for the *Ishrāqīyūn* or *Ishrāqī* philosophers, an Iranian school of mystical philosophy (*Hikmat al-Ishrāq*, ‘Philosophy of Illumination’)



founded by Shihāb al-Dīn Suhrawardī al-Maqtūl (1154–1191), which combined elements of Sufism and Shi'ism with Hellenistic, Orphic and Hermetic philosophy, and Zoroastrian angelology.

Suhrawardī wrote about fifty books on the subject, in Arabic and Persian, one of which bears the title *Ḥikmat al-Ishrāq*. According to this philosophy, that which is understood metaphysically as existence (*wujūd*) is what is grasped experientially as light (*nūr*).

The divine Essence is understood as the primal Light through which everything comes into existence:

The Essence of the First Absolute Light, God, gives constant illumination, whereby it is manifested, bringing all things into existence, giving life to them by its rays. Everything in the world is derived from the Light of His essence and all beauty and perfection are the gift of His bounty, and to attain fully to this illumination is salvation.

*Shihāb al-Dīn Suhrawardī, Ḥikmat al-Ishrāq, HIS fol.5b; cf. in RMI p.79*

The primal Light is said to radiate through the ordered ranks of an innumerable number of angels or spirits, and the process of cognition at the human level is understood as illumination from above through the intermediary of these spirits. An elaborate theory of illumination is propounded whereby the lowest level may be used to reach the highest. Various ascetic exercises are prescribed in a process that leads from this world to another of which this is only a reflection.

Later, in the fifteenth century, the principles of the *Ishrāqīs* were again restated by Abū al-Mawāhib al-Shādhilī in his *Quwānīn Ḥikam al-Ishrāq*.

See also: **ḥikmah**.

**istighrāq** (A/P) *Lit.* absorption, submersion, immersion; absorption in God; the loss of the consciousness of individuality through immersion in the Divine:

According to the *ṣūfīs*, immersion (*istighrāq*) is where the heart is so absorbed in remembrance (*dhikr*) that it has no awareness of itself or of the remembrance (*dhikr*). Gnostics (*ʿarīfūn*) consider this state to be annihilation (*fanā*).

*Tahānawī, Kashshāf Iṣṭilāḥāt al-Funūn, KIFT3 p.399, in SSE11 p.89*

Al-ʿĀrif (the gnostic, al-Ḥallāj) said: “Immersion (*istighrāq*) occurs only when one has attained the state of contemplative vision (*mushāhadah*) and involves the annihilation (*fanā*) of the lover in God’s majesty through His love.”

*Rūzbihān, Mashrab al-Arwāḥ 5:48, MARB p.112; cf. in SSE11 p.89*

Rūmī describes *istighrāq* in *Fīhi mā Fīhi*:

When a fly is plunged in honey, all the members of its body are reduced to the same condition, and it does not move. Similarly, the term *istighrāq* is applied to one who has no conscious existence or initiative or movement. Any action that proceeds from him is not his own. If he is still struggling in the water, or if he cries out, “Oh! I am drowning,” he is not said to be in the state of absorption (*istighrāq*).

*Rūmī, Fīhi mā Fīhi 11, KFF p.44, in MJR7 p.248*

**istinbāṭ** (A/P) *Lit.* deduction, derivation, indirect comprehension, discovery; intuitive deductions; flashes of insight; the intuitive method by which Sufis determine the meaning of the *Qur’ān* and Muslim tradition:

*Istinbāṭ* is to extract philosophical wisdom from the Book (*Kitāb*, *i.e.* the *Qur’ān*) and the *Sunnah* (customs and traditions).

*Rūzbihān, Sharḥ-i Shaṭḥiyāt 545:1312, CPS p.634, in FNI9 p.21*

*Istinbāṭ* is the rigorous extraction of meaning from texts, using the intuitive faculty (*qūwah al-qarīḥah*).

*Jurjānī, Ta’rīfāt, KTJ p.27*

Rūmī, on the other hand, suggests that the best way to discover the meaning of the *Qur’ān* is from one who has put its mystic principles into practice, and has effaced himself:

Ask the meaning of the *Qur’ān* from the *Qur’ān* alone,  
and from that one who has set fire to his idle fancy,  
and has become a sacrifice to the *Qur’ān*  
and whose I-ness has been laid low,  
so that the *Qur’ān* has become the essence of his spirit.

*Rūmī, Maṣnavī V:3128–29, MJR6 p.188*

**ittiḥād** (A/P) *Lit.* made one; union, unification; the union of two or more distinct essences; mystically, being made one with God; becoming merged in the divine Unity; the union of the lover (the soul) and the divine Beloved, such that although the lover may appear externally to will and to act, he is actually only an instrument of the divine will; a heretical belief, according to orthodox Islam, though espoused by a number of Sufis, who avoided the charge of heresy by pointing out that since only God exists, the soul already exists in God and there is thus no question of two separate essences becoming one:

Unification (*ittiḥād*) is the contemplative vision (*shuhūd*) of the absolute, single Being of God, through whom all things exist. Hence, anything may become unified with Him, in the sense that the existence of all things is based on Him, being nonexistent in themselves, not in the sense that each thing has a separate existence of its own that may become united with God, for that is impossible.

*Shāh Ni'mat Allāh Valī, Rasā'il, RNV4 p.5, in SSE12 p.128*

Khawājah 'Ubayd Allāh (Aḥrār) said, "If they ask the meaning of unification (*ittiḥād*), tell them it means drowning in God's Being."

*Jāmī, Nafahāt al-Uns, NUJ p.411, in SSE12 p.128*

That lover who sings, "I am You, and You are me,"  
is describing pure unification (*ittiḥād*).

*Rūzbihān, Sharḥ-i Shaṭḥiyāt 493:1232, CPS p.615, in SSE12 p.128*

However, to claim that God could be *ḥālī* (incarnate), *ittiḥād* (made one) and *imtizāj* (commingled) with that which is phenomenal (*i.e.* man) is deemed heretical because it is frequently emphasized in the *Qur'ān* that there is only one Being – God has no "partners". For instance:

God does not forgive that partners (*yushrik*)  
should be set up with Him,  
but He forgives anything else, to whoever He pleases;  
To set up partners (*yushrik*) with God  
is to devise a sin most heinous indeed.

*Qur'ān 4:48; cf. AYA*

The heresy involved the suggestion that there is any being other than God. In some Muslim intellectual circles, therefore, elaborate distinctions were sometimes made between the doctrines of *ḥulūl* (incarnation of God in a human being, incarnationism) and *ittiḥād*, in the attempt to justify *ittiḥād* and avoid a charge of heresy. Thus, Manṣūr al-Ḥallāj's statement "I am God!" which earned him a martyr's death on a charge of incarnationism, was explained by Rūmī nearly three hundred years later to mean not *ḥulūl* (incarnation) but *ittiḥād-i Nūr* (oneness with the Light):

This 'I', O presumptuous meddler,  
was 'He' (God) in the inmost consciousness,  
through oneness with the Light (*ittiḥād-i Nūr*),  
not through (a belief in) the doctrine of incarnation (*ḥulūl*).

*Rūmī, Maṣnavī V:2038; cf. MJR6 p.122*

To Sufis such as Rūmī, however, the arguments over *ittiḥād* and *ḥulūl* seem to have held little meaning. What was important to them was actual experience of that mystical union. Taking the legendary slave, Ayāz, to symbolize the perfect saint, Rūmī writes:

How can the real ‘I’ be revealed by thinking?  
 That ‘I’ is revealed only after passing away from self (*fanā*).  
 These intellects in their quest (of the real ‘I’)  
     fall into the abyss of argument over incarnation (*ḥulūl*) and *ittiḥād*.  
 O Ayāz, you who have passed away from self in union with God,  
     like a star in the beams of the sun, . . .  
     you are not afflicted with (arguments concerning) *ḥulūl* and *ittiḥād*.  
*Rūmī, Maṣnavī V:4146–49; cf. MJR6 p.248*

Ibn al-Fāriḍ, a Sufi who was also accused of heresy, wrote extensively in his odes concerning his union with the divine Beloved. He says, for example, that those who see themselves as separate from the object of their love and worship are actually “devoted to a secret polytheism”, by presenting their own individual selves as rivals to God:

Had you been one (*wāḥid*), you would have come  
     to feel intuitively the truth of what I said;  
 But – did you but know it – you were devoted to a secret polytheism,  
     having a soul that strayed from the guidance of the Truth;  
 And he in whose love the unification (*tawḥīd*) of his Beloved  
     is not accomplished falls by his polytheism  
     into the fire of separation from his Beloved. . . .  
 Forsake the error of separation (*farq*),  
     for union (*jamʿ*) will result in your finding the right way –  
 The way of those who vied with each other in seeking oneness (*ittiḥād*).  
*Ibn al-Fāriḍ, Tāʾīyah 226–28, 240, DFQM pp.68–69; cf. in SIM pp.220, 222*

At another place, he says that he “became single” in “oneness (*ittiḥād*)” when he “awoke” from the “slumber” of duality – of separation between himself and the Beloved he contemplated:

The duality of my existence during my contemplation  
     became single in my oneness (*ittiḥād*),  
     when I awoke from my slumber.  
*Ibn al-Fāriḍ, Tāʾīyah 453, DFQM p.88; cf. in SIM p.239*

See also: **ḥulūl, imtizāj.**

**jāgrat(a) avasthā** (S/H) *Lit.* waking (*jāgrat*) state (*avasthā*); wakefulness (*jāgrata*); the waking state of consciousness; also called *vishva* (universal, universe) and *vaishvānara* (common to all men). The *Paingala Upanishad* describes how the consciousness of the Supreme is deluded by association with *māyā* (illusion), and descends into the realm of waking, dreaming, and deep sleep as the captive soul (*jīva*):

The omniscient Lord, joined to a particle of *māyā*, on entering the various bodies, and being deluded by it (*māyā*), becomes the individual soul (*jīva*). Through self-identification with the three bodies (gross, subtle, and causal), he becomes both doer and reaper. Continually associated with the attributes of waking (*jāgrat*), dreaming (*svapna*), sleeping (*sushupti*), swoon (*mūrchhā*) and death (*maraṇa*), immersed in suffering, he spins round and round, like a potter's wheel or (a circle of buckets on) a water wheel, and is subject to birth and death.

*Paingala Upanishad 1:12*

In fact, says the *Upanishad*, there are two further states – unconsciousness or swoon (*mūrchhā*) and death (*maraṇa*). Although the *jīva* has its headquarters at the eye centre, it has spread out into the body, becoming involved in the cycle of cause and effect:

There are five states (*pañcha-avasthā*) – waking (*jāgrat*), dreaming (*svapna*), deep sleep (*sushupti*), swoon (*mūrchhā*), and death (*maraṇa*). The waking state (*jāgrat avasthā*) consists in the perception of sound and other things by means of the sense organs, such as the ears and so on. . . . The individual soul (*jīva*), established in the midst of the eyebrows (*bhrū-madhyā*), but pervading the entire body from head to foot, becomes the doer of every kind of action. . . . Being the reaper of their respective fruits, he reaps the fruit of his actions in the next world, too. Like an emperor tired of worldly activities, he seeks the way to retire into his inner chamber.

*Paingala Upanishad 2:7–8*

Shankara is one among many who have pointed out that even the waking state is unreal and a state of spiritual ignorance, when compared to the consciousness of the Supreme:

Just as the place, time, objects, knower and so on conjured up in sleep (*nidrā*), are all unreal, so too is the world experienced here in the waking (*jāgrat*) state; it all arises as a result of one's own ignorance (*ajñāna*).

*Shankara, Vivekachūḍāmaṇi 252; cf. VCSM p.98*

The *Kaṭha Upanishad* therefore exhorts the reader to awaken spiritually, more especially if he has come into contact with a truly spiritual *guru*:

Having come to the excellent ones (mystics), arise, awake (*jāgrat*); realize that path to be like a razor's edge, difficult to tread and hard to cross – so say the wise.

*Kaṭha Upanishad* 1:3.14

See also: **avasthā**.

**jalwah, jilwah** (A), **jalvat, jilvat** (P) *Lit.* unveiling, clarifying, revealing; vision, appearing, emergence, becoming manifest; an experience of ecstatic inner illumination; one of the transitory states (*aḥwāl*) described in Sufism; from the same root as *jalīy* (manifest, clearly visible) and *tajallī* (an effulgence or revelation of inner light); the state that comes upon a Sufi after sitting in utter solitude and forgetfulness of self. *Jilwah* is used specifically in a mundane sense for the unveiling of a bride and thus, metaphorically, for the mystic unveiling either of the lover (soul) or Beloved (God or master).

*Jalwah* is sometimes used as a rhyming complement to *khalwah* (seclusion, extreme solitude):

Emergence (*jalwah*) represents the seeker's coming out of solitude (*khalwah*) adorned with divine Attributes, where both his physical and spiritual body have become purified of any self-identity, so that this body is totally related to and works through God.

*Jurjānī, Ta'rīfāt, KTJ p.74, in SSE7 p.3*

Sufis have debated which is superior, but Ibn al-ʿArabī says that it is a matter of individual experience. According to the nature or temperament of the individual, one person will take on the attributes of the Names of God related to inner solitude, while another will become an expression of those Names that express His external manifestation:

Some maintain that emergence (*jalwah*) is superior to solitude (*khalwah*), while others hold that solitude (*khalwah*) is superior. In fact, superiority is solely dependent on which Name has overwhelmed one. Those overwhelmed by the Names, the First (*al-Awwal*) and the Inner (*al-Bāṭin*) seek solitude, while those overwhelmed by the Names, the Last (*al-Ākhir*) and the Outer (*al-Zāhir*) seek emergence.

*Ibn al-ʿArabī, Meccan Revelations, FM2 p.152, in FNI7 p.8; cf. in SSE7 p.3*

Ḥāfiẓ is speaking of the vision (*jalvat*) of the Divine when he upbraids the pilgrim to Mecca for feeling pride in having visited the *Ka'bah*, when he (Ḥāfiẓ) has the vision of God Himself:

Boast not to me of the vision you behold,  
 O leader of the *ḥajj* (*malik al-ḥājj*);  
 For you behold the House (*Khānah*, i.e. the *Ka'bah*),  
 while I behold the Master of the House (*Khānah Khudā*).  
*Ḥāfiẓ, Divān, DHA p.178, DIH p.303; cf. DHWC (392:4) p.671*

See also: **ḥāl**, **khalwah** (8.4).

**jam'** (A/P) *Lit.* collectedness, concentration, union; sum, group, conjunction; concentrated, close, total, gathered together, collected; also, assembly, gathering; in Sufism, union with the Divine, collectedness of scattered thoughts, the gathering together of the inner attention (*jam' al-himmah*) that comprises mystic concentration; the converse of *tafriqah* (separation, dispersion) and *farq* (separation).

*Jam'* and *tafriqah* are used in a variety of mundane contexts, as in such expressions as *jam' al-ḥaddād* (union of opposites, coincidence of opposites):

Thus, in arithmetic, *jam'* denotes the addition and *tafriqat* the subtraction of numbers; in grammar, *jam'* is the agreement of words in derivation, while *tafriqat* is the difference in meaning; in law, *jam'* is analogy (*qiyās*) and *tafriqat* the characteristics of an authoritative text, or *jam'* is the text and *tafriqat* the analogy; in divinity, *jam'* denotes the essential and *tafriqat* the formal attributes of God.

*Hujwīrī, Kashf al-Mahjūb XIV, KMM pp.323–24, KM p.252*

To the Sufis, however, *jam'* meant union with the Divine. Many Sufis have defined it in this way:

In *ṣūfī* terminology, *jam'* means to be merged in God and to forget everything else. In other words, it is union with God.

*Javād Nūrbakhsh, MSG2 p.79*

The term union (*jam'*) refers to ... union of the inner attention (*jam' al-himmah*) of the mystic with God... Al-ʿĀrif (the gnostic, al-Ḥallāj) said: “Whenever the Essence perceives the Essence, that is union (*jam'*).”

*Rūzbihān, Mashrab al-Arwāḥ 8:32, MARB p.160; cf. in SSE12 p.34*

To behold God and no other is *jam'*.

*Shāh Nī'mat Allāh Valī, Rasā'il, RNV4 p.21, in MSG2 pp.79–84*

*Jam'* is the same as eternity, and with no perishability. It occurs when God gathers together mysteries in the garb of light, within the heart of the lover.

*Rūzbiḥān, Sharḥ-i Shaṭḥiyāt 410:1097, CPS p.563, in MSG2 p.83*

Don't you see that, according to the unanimous opinion of all the saints who seek God, the station of union (*jam'*) belongs to the perfection of saintship? Now, in this station, a man attains such a degree of rapturous love that his intelligence is enraptured in gazing upon the act of God; and in his longing for the divine Agent, he regards the whole universe as that and sees nothing but that.

*Hujwīrī, Kashf al-Maḥjūb XIV, KMM p.305; cf. KM p.237*

Union (*jam'*) is a specific term describing the condition of a person whose existence is focused on God. Such a person is not conscious of creation and individual existence which are, in reality, nonexistent.

*Abū Naṣr al-Sarrāj, Luma' fī al-Taṣawwuf, KLTA p.339; cf. in SSE12 p.34*

*Jam'* is commonly contrasted with *tafriqat* (severance, separation):

*Jam'* denotes the state of union and unity of thought. It is the opposite of separation (*tafriqat*), which is a veil of people, things and desires, obscuring God's presence, and which causes a person to consider God as separate from himself. Until a disciple's existence is only in perceiving God, it is inevitable that duality will exist. When he perceives others as though they are perceived by God, this is called *jam' al-jam'* or merging of the soul in God.

*Ja'far Sajjādī, Farhang-i Lughāt va-Iṣṭilāḥāt va-Ta'bīrāt-i 'Irfānī, FLI p.291*

The reality of *jam'* means union (*ittiḥād*), and union (*ittiḥād*) is a sign of friendship. Separation (*tafriqat*) is a sign of duality, and duality means to be a stranger. The light of the candle is a sign of union (*jam'*). Wax without fire has no light, and fire without wax cannot be used to light gatherings. This union (*jam'īyat*) is the path (*ṭarīqat*), and beyond this is the Truth (*Ḥaqīqat*), which is annihilation (*nāstī*) of the human estate (*basharīyat*).

*Anṣārī, Majmū'ah-i Rasā'il, RAAA1 p.367, in FLI pp.291–92*

*Jam'* is similarly distinguished from *farq* (distinction, division, separation):



In *ṣūfī* terminology, union (*jam'*) stands in contradistinction to separation (*farq*), which represents the veiling of God by the creation, where one sees everything as the creation and God as separate from all His aspects. Union (*jam'*) signifies consciousness of God without consciousness of the creation, and this is the level of annihilation (*fanā'*) of the wayfarer. As long as the wayfarer's consciousness of self persists, there is no consciousness of God without consciousness of the creation.

*Lāhijī, Sharḥ-i Gulshan-i Rāz, SGR p.27; cf. in SSE12 p.49*

Demonstrating the Sufi love of variations and subdivisions on a theme, *jam'* also appears in a variety of compound expressions. Hujwīrī speaks of two forms of *jam'*, which distinguish between those who do or do not return from union in order to perform their religious duties such as prayer and so on:

Union (*jam'*) is of two kinds: sound union (*jam'-i salāmat*) and broken union (*jam'-i taksīr*).

Sound union (*jam'-i salāmat*) is that which God produces in a man when he is in the state of rapture and ecstasy, and God causes him to receive and fulfil His commandments and to mortify himself. . . . Broken union (*jam'-i taksīr*) is that in which a man's judgment becomes distraught and bewildered, so that it is like the judgment of a lunatic.

*Hujwīrī, Kashf al-Maḥjūb XIV, KMM pp.330–31, KM pp.257–58*

Other expressions include *jam'-i kawn* (the all-encompassing existence), by which is meant the realm of humanity (*'ālam-i nāsūt*), the last stage in the manifestation of the Divine, where all the threads of creation are drawn together in the microcosm of man; *insidād al-jam'* (breaking of union), which is the dispersion after union, with the perception of the many in the One, and the One in the many; *jam'-i aḥadīyat* (union of the oneness), which refers to union at the station of *aḥadīyat* (absolute oneness); *'ayn al-jam'* (essence of union), another name for divine unity; *jam'-i wujūd* (union of being), which is equated with the station of *qāba qawsayn* (two bows' length); *'ayn al-jam'-i dhātīyah* (essence of the essential union), which is the station of *aw adnā* (or nearer); and *jam' al-jam'* (union of union), the ultimate and highest union.

See also: **jam'** (7.5), **jam' al-jam'**, **tafriqah** (►4).

**jam' al-jam'** (A), **jam'-i jam'** (P) *Lit.* union (*jam'*) of union (*jam'*); perfect union, total union, complete union; a higher stage or station (*maqām*) than *jam'*; sometimes called the last stage of union; identified by some Sufis with *qāba*

*qawsayn* (two bows' length), the station of perfection said to have been attained by the greatest of the saints and prophets, surpassed only by the stage of *aw adnā* (or nearer), a stage reserved for Muḥammad and certain of his inheritors.<sup>1</sup>

A number of Sufis have defined this sublime state beyond all states:

*Jam' al-jam'* is complete union. It is one of the levels of spiritual ascension, higher and more complete than *jam'*. First, perceive everything through God and release yourself from all powers except God. Next, dissolve in God completely, as this is the level of union.

*Jurjānī, Ta'rīfāt, KTJ p.75*

The union of union (*jam' al-jam'*) is another station, more complete and higher than that of union (*jam'*). Union (*jam'*) involves consciousness of things in God and seeking liberation from the sense of being motivated or empowered by anything other than God. Union of union (*jam' al-jam'*) involves total obliteration and annihilation from whatever is other than God, this being the level of Oneness (*Aḥadīyah*).

*Jurjānī, Ta'rīfāt, KTJ p.75; cf. in SSE12 pp.36–37*

Beyond union (*jam'*) and separation (*farq*) is union of union (*jam' al-jam'*). . . . When a person affirms his self and affirms creation, but witnesses it all as existing through the Real, that is union (*jam'*). But if he is snatched from all regard of creation, uprooted from his own self, utterly removed from perceiving any 'other' through the sovereign power of Reality when it appears and seizes him, that is union of union (*jam' al-jam'*).

Separation (*tafriqah*) is the witnessing of others than God, most glorious and sublime. Union (*jam'*) is witnessing the others through God. Union of union (*jam' al-jam'*) is the utter perishing and passing away of all perception of any other than God, most glorious and sublime, through the onslaughts of Reality.

*Al-Qushayrī, Tarjamah-'i Rasā'il, RQQQ p.39, in EIM p.118*

Union of union (*jam' al-jam'*) involves total obliteration in God in the course of the vision (*ru'yah*) of the divine Beauty.

*Ibn al-Arabī, Meccan Revelations, FMIA3 (1:73) p.198; cf. in SSE12 p.37*

1. W.C. Chittick, *Divine Flashes*, *DF* pp.137–38.

**jam'īyah** (A), **jam'īyat** (P) *Lit.* a collected state, tranquillity, concentratedness, inner collectedness, concentration; unitive consciousness; being fully

concentrated on God, unaware of all else; also, all-comprehensiveness, in the sense, for example, that the *Qurʾān* is described by Ibn al-ʿArabī as the most complete (all-comprehensive) book in existence, due to its being transmitted by the perfect and all-comprehensive character of Muḥammad,<sup>1</sup> or in the sense that God has made the “human configuration” all-comprehensive.<sup>2</sup>

See also: **jamʿ**.

1. Ibn al-ʿArabī, *Meccan Revelations* 2:107.20, 3:160.34, *FMIA*3 (1:73) p.160, *FMIA*5 (4:341) p.238, *SPK* p.239.
2. Ibn al-ʿArabī, *Meccan Revelations* 3:248.18, *FMIA*5 (4:355) p.367, *SPK* p.195.

**javana** (Pa) *Lit.* swift, running or going swiftly, swift understanding, impulsion; apperception, becoming aware of a sensory or mental stimulus; thought impulses; a part of the sequence of thought moments (*cittakkhaṇa*, *citta*) that comprise a thought process (*citta-vīthi*); a term for which it is generally agreed there is no adequate translation. Derived from the verb *javati* (to run, to hasten, to impel, to incite), *javana* implies both impulse and swift understanding.

The term *javana* appears in this context in only one of the Pali *suttas* – in the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*, which speaks in passing of the “moment of impulsion (*javana-khaṇa*) of a wholesome *kamma* (*kusala-kamma*)”.<sup>1</sup> In the *Abhidhamma* (analytical systematization of the Pali *suttas*) canon, *javana* is used in the *Paṭṭhāna* in a manner suggesting that the reader would understand the meaning. The overall concept of thought moments is first elaborated in the scholarly commentaries to the Pali Buddhist *suttas*, is further described in later commentaries and manuals – such as Buddhaghosa’s *Visuddhimagga* (‘Path of Purification’)<sup>2</sup> and *Aṭṭhasālinī* (‘The Expositor’) – and is summarized in the *Abhidhamma* manuals of Buddhaddatta and Anuruddha.

According to these sources, a normal thought process is comprised of a possible seventeen thought moments. Once a sensory stimulus has initiated the cognitive process and has received an initial evaluation, it moves into the sphere of conscious awareness. Seven fleeting thought moments (*javana-citta*) then proceed in swift succession with regard to the original sense impression. These seven represent the climax of the thought process, the stage of maximum cognition. It is now that the individual becomes fully aware of the sense object and all its implications. It is also at this point that the will may be exercised and action taken, which may be either wholesome (*kusala*) or unwholesome (*akusala*), according to individual temperament.

The action taken can result in the creation of corresponding *kamma* (S. *karma*). In mundane (*lokiya*) or normal worldly consciousness, any of a number of karmically wholesome or unwholesome modifications of consciousness may arise at this stage, resulting in the creation of *kamma* that

is correspondingly wholesome or unwholesome. These modifications, and consequently the *javana-cittas*, may, for example, be founded on either the three unwholesome roots (*rāga* – lust or greed; *moha* – delusion; *dvesha* – hatred or aversion) or the three wholesome roots, which are their opposites. For the *arahanta* (noble one, enlightened one), however, who has reached the culmination of the spiritual journey, his thought processes and *javanas* function independently of the kammic process, and he creates no *kamma*. They are therefore known as *kiriya* (functional) *javanas* or *kiriya-cittas*, sometimes translated as ‘inoperative’ *cittas* because they bear no kammic fruit.

The stimulus initiating the sequence of thought moments may be sensory or mental, such as a desire. In the case of a mental stimulus, the ensuing *javanas* differ to some extent from those that follow a sensory stimulus.

Other *javanas* are also described. Four supramundane or transcendental *javanas*, for instance, are said to precede entry into each of the eight *jhānas* (states of meditative absorption), which correspond to entry into and attainment of the stages of the supramundane or transcendental path (*lokuttara-magga*). These four *javanas* are designated: the *parikamma-citta* (preliminary thought moment); *upacāra-citta* (proximity thought moment); *anuloma-citta* (conformity thought moment, moment of complete acceptance); and *gotrabhū-citta* (overcoming or maturity thought moment), which severs connection with the mundane world and links to the higher supramundane or transcendental path leading to *nibbāna*.

The *Abhidhamma* and various commentaries have created a system that attempts to describe the multifaceted functioning of mind and consciousness. Among these many divisions and subdivisions is a classification system described in the *Abhidhammattha Sangaha* (‘Compendium of *Abhidhamma*’) of Anuruddha (c.C11th–12th) that identifies fifty-five kinds of *javana-citta*. These are: twelve immoral or unwholesome *javana-cittas* – eight rooted in greed (*rāga*), two in hatred or aversion (*dvesha*), and two in delusion (*moha*); eight kinds of moral or wholesome *javana-cittas*, which belong to the realm of the senses (*kāmāvacara*); eight kinds of purely functional or inoperative *citta* (*kiriya-citta*); one kind of smile- or laughter-producing thought moment (*hasituppāda-citta*), which is a joyful inoperative *citta* present in an *arahanta*, and which expresses itself as the joy that radiates from an enlightened being when he laughs or smiles; and a further twenty-two *cittas* that relate to the realms of form (*rūpāvacara-citta*), the formless realms (*arūpāvacara-citta*), and the supramundane or transcendental (*lokuttara-citta*) path. Essentially, the mind is minutely analysed and categorized according to the way it functions in the physical and higher realms of consciousness.

See also: **citta**, **cittakkhaṇa**, **gotrabhū-ñāṇa**.

1. *Paṭisambhidāmagga* 2:6.2, 7, 17, 22, 27, *PTSP2* pp.72–77; cf. *PDPM* pp.271–74.
2. Buddhaghosa, *Visuddhimagga* 14:115–24, *PTSV* pp.458–60.

**jhānanga (Pa), dhyānāṅga (S), bsam gtan gyi yan lag (T), chánzhī (C), zenshi (J)**

*Lit.* constituents (*anga*, *yan lag*, *zhī*) of absorption (*jhāna*, *bsam gtan*, *chán*, *zen*); factors of absorption, *jhāna* factors; in the Buddhist Pali *suttas* (discourses) and the *Abhidhamma* (systematized analysis of the *suttas*), five aspects of mind that must be present in order to enter the first *jhāna*, and which – during ascent through the four *jhānas* – are progressively refined, brought under control and then transcended, with only the last constituent (one-pointedness and equanimity) remaining in the fourth *jhāna*.

The four *jhānas* are states of contemplative absorption or expanded consciousness experienced when passing through *rūpaloka* (world of subtle forms, patterns, or archetypes), which would seem to correspond to the astral and higher realms of Western terminology. By remaining focused in the *jhānas*, the meditator can avoid the distraction of visions of *rūpaloka* and its inhabitants when passing through. The five *jhānangas* are:

<i>Vitakka</i>	Initial application of concentrated thought to a meditation object or topic.
<i>Vicāra</i>	Sustained application of concentrated thought to a meditation object or topic.
<i>Pīti</i>	Rapture.
<i>Sukha</i>	Bliss.
<i>Ekaggatā</i>	One-pointedness; closely associated with equanimity ( <i>upekkhā</i> ) or great inner peace, which is sometimes listed as the fifth <i>jhānanga</i> .

Although the Pali *suttas* speak only of four *jhānas*, with the surmounting of *vitakka* and *vicāra* associated with passage through the first *jhāna*, the *Abhidhamma* texts also list them as five by allocating separate *jhānas* to the surmounting of *vitakka* and *vicāra*.

Access to the first and subsequent *jhānas* is impeded by the five hindrances (*pañca-nīvaraṇa*): sensory desire (*kāmacchanda*) of any kind in the field of the five senses; ill will (*vyāpāda*) of any variety; sloth and torpor (*thīna-middha*); restlessness and anxiety (*uddhacca-kukkucca*); and wavering doubt or lack of conviction (*vicikicchā*). While these five are active, the mind remains constantly distracted, and finds it hard to focus.

The *Abhidhamma* also assigns each of the five *jhānangas* as a specific antidote to one of the five hindrances:

<i>Vitakka</i>	Sloth and torpor ( <i>thīna-middha</i> ).
<i>Vicāra</i>	Wavering doubt or lack of conviction ( <i>vicikicchā</i> ).
<i>Pīti</i>	Ill will ( <i>vyāpāda</i> ).
<i>Sukha</i>	Restlessness and anxiety ( <i>uddhacca-kukkucca</i> ).
<i>Ekaggatā</i>	Sensory desire ( <i>kāmacchanda</i> ).

This does not mean that the five hindrances are eliminated completely and forever upon entry to the first *jhāna*; nor does it suggest that other *jhānangas* are of no help in overcoming other hindrances. The hindrances may reappear at almost any time, and the meditator must always be on guard. No mystic has ever suggested that spiritual life is always a smooth progression.

See also: **ekāgratā**, **jhāna** (8.5), **pīti**, **sukha**, **vichāra**, **vitakka**.

**jiànwù** (C), **zengo** (J) *Lit.* gradual (*jiàn*) awakening (*wù*); enlightenment resulting from the gradual removal of inner impurities, a process generally understood to take a number of lifetimes; contrasted with *dùnwù* (sudden awakening). See **dùnwù**.

**jiànxìng** (C) See **kenshō**.

**jìmiè** (C), **jakumetsu** (J) *Lit.* tranquillity (*jì*, *jaku*) + extinction (*miè*, *metsu*); the quiescence and stillness arising from the extinction of impurities and imperfections; used to translate *nirvāṇa* (S. blowing out, extinction).

*Jaku* is the cessation of all mental activity, disengaging it from the outside world in order to generate the necessary tranquillity and peace for meditation. The term is sometimes used to translate *śamatha* (S., Pa. *samatha*, tranquillity), as well as *śānti* (S. peace). The highest *jaku* or *jì* is *nirvāṇa*.

See also: **nirvāṇa**, **samatha** (8.5).

**jīndān** (C) *Lit.* gold (*jīn*) elixir (*dān*); elixir of immortality. See **dān**.

**jìng**, **bùdòng** (C) *Lit.* still, quiet, calm; stillness, tranquillity, serenity; without movement, motionless (*bùdòng*); contrasted with *dòng* (movement); in Daoism, the state of mind desired by one seeking inner realization of the *Dào*; *jìng* and *dòng* both as a state of mind and in the cosmic scheme of things.

Created things are constantly subject to the duality of movement and stillness. As the Daoist master Wáng Jiè (*d.c.* 1380) observes:

All things follow the cycle of movement (*dòng*) and stillness (*jìng*) embodied in the Great Ultimate (*tàijí*). Nothing departs from the principles of the *Dào*...

If you observe the *Dào* in stillness (*jìng*), you will see that the *Dào* is not entirely without motion (*dòng*). If you observe the *Dào* in movement (*dòng*), you will see that the *Dào* is not entirely without stillness (*jìng*). This is because movement (*dòng*) and stillness (*jìng*) are both part of the *Dào*.

*Wáng Jiè, Dàoxuán piān 1, 40, DZ1075, NEL pp.27, 41*

The relationship between *dòng* and *jìng* is akin to the relationship between the body (which, by nature, is in movement) and the spirit (which, by nature, is still). The thirteenth-century Daoist master Lǐ Dàochún presents other examples of *dòng* and *jìng*, and describes how movement and action arise from stillness:

The ebb and flow of firmness and yielding is the movement (*dòng*) and stillness (*jìng*) of change. The rise and fall of *yīn* and *yáng* is the movement (*dòng*) and stillness (*jìng*) of energy (*qì*). The growth and decay of energy is the movement (*dòng*) and stillness (*jìng*) of things. Rising by day and retiring by night is the movement (*dòng*) and stillness (*jìng*) of the body.

The advance and retreat of an individual, the appearance and disappearance of thoughts, the fortunes and misfortunes of life, the success and failure of affairs – all are alternations between movement (*dòng*) and stillness (*jìng*), the one giving way to the other. By contemplation (*guān*) of movement (*dòng*) and stillness (*jìng*), the transformations among the myriad things (*wànshì*) and the conditions of the myriad beings (*wànwù*) are revealed.

In stillness (*jìng*), there is preservation; in movement (*dòng*), there is divergence. In stillness (*jìng*), there is control; in movement (*dòng*), there is disorder. In stillness (*jìng*), there is certainty; in movement (*dòng*), there is a web of deceit and ill fortune. Stillness (*jìng*) is the foundation of movement (*dòng*); movement (*dòng*) is the potential in stillness (*jìng*). When movement (*dòng*) and stillness (*jìng*) are well-ordered, one's path is illuminated.

*Lǐ Dàochún, Zhōnghé jí, DZ249, JY226*

The natural condition of the true inner nature (*xìng*) of a human being is stillness (*jìng*). Yet it is inevitable that to some extent the material world will

impact negatively on this positive original state. Nevertheless, for as long as the Daoist acts (*wéi*) and moves (*dòng*) in a balanced manner, responding to circumstances in the spirit of *wúwéi* (non-action, unforced and selfless action), a certain stability is retained, as well as clarity of thought and vision. For as long as such a condition is maintained, the Daoist remains in a state of relative (though not yet pure) stillness (*jìng*), and consequently retains the potential to attain enlightenment (*míng*):

Where to start in order to attain the *Dào*? Stillness (*jìng*) and emptiness (*xū*) are the only hope for (development of) the immortal embryo (*tāixiān*).

In emptiness (*xū*), there is no obstruction; in stillness (*jìng*), there is no desire. When emptiness (*xū*) is complete and stillness (*jìng*) profound, contemplate the natural cycles of change and transformation, and know (that it is time) for return (to the *Dào*).

Let stillness (*jìng*) dominate action (*dòng*); let emptiness (*xū*) be the centre of reality. Both principles are necessary for the union of spirit (*shén*) and *Dào*.

*Lǐ Dàochún, Zhōnghé jí, DZ249, JY226*

Philosophically, the idea may be easy to express, yet for most people the everyday reality is that, even while sitting quietly and apparently still, whether awake or asleep, the mind roams far and wide, unchecked, and is anything but still. By contrast, one whose mind is truly tranquil at all times experiences peace and quietude even in the midst of a storm. For the Daoist, it is important to return to the stillness and tranquillity of one's original nature, as exemplified by the sage (*shèng*):

The sages are still (*jìng*); not because it is good to be still (*jìng*), but simply because they are still (*jìng*). Not even the ten thousand things (*wànwù*) can disturb them, so they are still (*jìng*).

*Zhuāngzǐ 13; cf. CTMP p.106*

The inner stillness experienced by the sages (*shèng*) is an integral aspect of their being, reflecting their purity and spiritual awareness. Sages know that an unquiet mind causes people to speak unwisely and engage in folly. By contrast, sages live their lives in a spirit of *wúwéi*, knowing when, and when not, to act.

Daoists wishing to attain this level of tranquillity realize that it is achieved through physical and mental “stillness (*jìng*)” rather than by external actions and book learning. The intention is to return to the Source (“the Root”), which is the *Dào*:



Attain the Great Void (*xūjí*),  
 remain single-mindedly centred and still (*jìng*).  
 The myriad things form and act,  
 but I observe them return to their Source –  
 Like plants that grow luxuriantly,  
 but return (die back) to the root (from which they sprang).

To return to the Root means stillness (*jìng*) –  
 it is called returning to one's (true spiritual) life (*mìng*).  
 Returning to one's (true spiritual) life  
 is to find the eternal (*cháng*).  
 To know the eternal is enlightenment (*míng*).

*Dàodé jīng 16*

Daoist writings compare the state of stillness (*jìng*) to motionless water or a polished mirror:

Water, when still (*jìng*), reflects even your beard and eyebrows. . . . If still (*jìng*) water can have such clarity (*míng*), imagine what the pure spirit can have. The sage's mind is still (*jìng*). Heaven and earth are reflected in it, the mirror of all life

*Zhuāngzǐ 13; cf. CTMP p.106*

Master Yáng Dàoshēng (C15th) describes six stages or phases of attaining *Dào*, of which the fifth is awakening wisdom. As he explains elsewhere, although “wisdom enables one to know the *Dào*, it is not itself attainment of the *Dào*.”<sup>1</sup> Nonetheless, though attainment of the *Dào* is the sixth and final stage, reaching the fifth stage of awakening one's innate wisdom is also a major achievement and a significant milestone. But for the emergence of wisdom, the mind must first be still:

The mind is the house of *Dào*. When it is completely empty (*xū*) and still (*jìng*), the *Dào* will come to dwell in it, and wisdom will emerge. Wisdom arises from one's original nature (*běnxìng*); it is not acquired as something new. However, it has become confused and scattered by greed and attachment, as a result of which it has fallen into a stupor. With cleansing and merging, it will return to purity and stillness; then one's original and true spiritual consciousness (*běn zhēnshén*) will gradually and automatically manifest itself. Wisdom is not something new and alien that has arisen independently from nowhere.

*Yáng Dàoshēng, Zhēnquán, JY244, ZW373*

External and internal stimuli set the mind in motion. A moving mind makes judgments; it sees differences and distinctions between things, and becomes lost in duality. Then one's apparent nature changes, becoming increasingly distant from the stillness of one's real and "original nature (*xìng*)". When stillness prevails, the mind remains inactive, at rest within. But when the mind is active, one's original nature is still present within, although it may be obscured:

When the original nature (*xìng*) is still (*jìng*),  
 then the mind (*xīn*) remains within.  
 When the mind is active (*dòng*),  
 then the original nature again remains within.  
 But when the mind prevails,  
 the original nature is annihilated;  
 And when the mind is annihilated,  
 the original nature is manifest.

*Dàtōng jīng*, DZ327; cf. TTEP p.68

Both *dòng* and *jìng* are a part of life, arising from their source, which is the *Dào*. By retaining the stability and peace of a still mind, it is possible to be endlessly adaptable to the changing circumstances of life:

If one is truly centred and merged (with the *Dào*) within oneself, then in emptiness (*xū*) one's entire being (*tǐ*, embodiment) is conscious, still (*jìng*) and awake, and one's deeds (*dòng*) are proper. This is how one can adapt to the endless changes in the world (*tiānxià*, 'land under heaven'). Being centred and merged is the sublime expression of unobstructed awareness.

*Lǐ Dàochún*, *Zhōnghé jí*, DZ249, JY226

Using the pseudonym *Shuǐjīngzǐ*, an unknown seventeenth-century commentator on a Daoist text explains that heaven is pure and earth is impure. He therefore counsels a seeker to find purity through stillness, with the help of an enlightened master (*míngshī*):

The *Dào* is the way of heaven. It is also our (original) nature (*xìng*). The energy of heaven is pure and the energy of earth is impure. . . . If you do not know the meaning of pure and impure, if you are unaware of movement (*dòng*) and stillness (*jìng*) within yourself (*shēn*), then you should rapidly accumulate (the merit of) good deeds, petition the lords of heaven, and ask an enlightened master (*míngshī*) to show you the *Dào* within yourself. You must let the light of the sacred sun and moon shine in, so that the impure energy sinks and the pure energy rises.

Sitting quietly without moving (*bùdòng*) is stillness (*jìng*). Craving (*gǎn*) is called ‘continuous movement (*sùidòng*)’. If you are forever entertaining desires (*yù*) based on the senses, then there is movement. If you are forever free of desires, then in stillness (*jìng*) you will find the inner mystery. . . .

The inner teachings must be transmitted orally and personally from master to disciple before they can be understood from the heart. If you practise the teachings diligently, immortality is not difficult to attain.

*Shuǐjīngzǐ, Qīngjìng jīng* (2) túzhù; cf. *CSTM* pp.12–13

Shuǐjīngzǐ then points out the difference between the primordial spirit (*yuánshén*) and the thinking spirit (*shíshén*, the thinking and knowing aspect of the mind, intellect); how spirit is pure and still (*qīngjìng*), while thinking disturbs the mind; and why being human is a blessing. He also understands the “teachings of the Buddha and the *Dào*” to represent the same one path to enlightenment:

The primordial spirit (*yuánshén*) tends toward purity and stillness (*qīngjìng*); the thinking spirit (*shíshén*) tends toward action (*dòng*), and disturbs the human mind (*rénxīn*) so that it cannot be pure and still (*qīngjìng*). As this continues, the primordial spirit is harmed, and a hundred illnesses arise. Therefore, we need to realize the value of the human body. We need to appreciate the good fortune of being born in the human form and the good fortune of encountering the teachings of the Buddha and the *Dào*.

You who are born in human form should not spend your time foolishly. You must value your (original) nature (*xìng*) and your (true spiritual) life (*mìng*). Recognize the difference between spirit and intellect. Do not confuse the true with the false. Recognize the difference between the human mind (*rénxīn*) and the mind of *Dào* (*dàoxīn*). Do not mistake the human mind for the mind of *Dào*, and intellect for the spirit. Do not mistake the false self (*shēn*) for the true self. . . .

The human mind does not have an innate tendency toward stillness (*jìng*). But because the spirit dwells in it, the mind is still (*jìng*) when the spirit is in control. The human mind does not have an innate tendency toward activity (*hàodòng*). But because intellect dwells in it, the mind is active (*hàodòng*) when intellect is in control.

*Shuǐjīngzǐ, Qīngjìng jīng* (6, 7) túzhù; cf. *CSTM* pp.36–37, 41

Master Lǐ Dàochún outlines the differences between the human mind and the mind of *Dào*. The primary difference lies in the stillness and “unmoving” nature of “an illumined mind”:

The ancients say, “Always extinguish a moving mind (*dòngxīn*); never extinguish an illumined mind (*zhàoxīn*).” An unmoving mind (*bùdòngxīn*) is an illumined mind; a mind that never stops is a deluded mind (*wàngxīn*). The illumined mind is the mind of *Dào* (*dàoxīn*), the deluded mind is the human mind (*rénxīn*).

The saying, “The mind of *Dào* (*dàoxīn*) is exceedingly elusive” means that it is fine and subtle, difficult to experience. The saying, “The human mind (*rénxīn*) is a great danger” means that it is treacherous and restless.

The mind of *Dào* (*dàoxīn*) is within the human mind (*rénxīn*) and the human mind (*rénxīn*) is within the mind of *Dào* (*dàoxīn*). Which predominates depends simply on whether the mind is moving (*dòng*) or still (*jìng*). Only in those who “adhere persistently to the centre” is the illumined mind (*zhàoxīn*) constantly present and the deluded mind (*wàngxīn*) unmoving (*bùdòng*). Then what was treacherous becomes calm and peaceful, and what was elusive becomes clear and manifest.

At this point, the mind free from delusion is recovered, and the *Dào* free from delusion is attained. As the *Yijing* says, this is “returning, so as to reveal the mind of heaven and earth.”

*Lǐ Dàochún, Zhōnghé jí, DZ249, JY226*

*Jìng* (stillness) is associated with permanence; but, like *xū* (emptiness), it is not understood as a form of inertia. Both are the result of spiritual realization. Being an essential attribute of original nature, *jìng* is related to both *wúwéi* (non-action, unforced and selfless action) and to *róu* (flexibility). The *Zhuāngzǐ* describes these attributes as they manifest in the sage (*shèng*):

Emptiness (*xū*), stillness (*jìng*), equanimity, detachment (*dàn*), quietude (*jì*), silence (*mò*), and non-doing (*wúwéi*) – these are the ways in which the non-doing (*xiū*) of the kingly, sovereign sages (*shèngrén*) shows itself. Their nature is entirely aligned to the *Dào*; they are the exemplars in heaven and earth.

From non-doing (*xiū*), they are empty (*xū*); from their emptiness (*xū*) arises completeness; from their completeness arises the good ordering of their affairs. From their emptiness (*xū*) arises stillness (*jìng*); from their stillness (*jìng*) arises the (natural) movement (*dòng*) (of their spirit); and from this movement (*dòng*) arises their attainment.

Their stillness (*jìng*) gives rise to their non-doing (*wúwéi*). In non-doing (*wúwéi*), they attend to things by way of duty. Non-doing (*wúwéi*) is accompanied by contentment. Where there is contentment, anxieties and troubles find no place, which leads to longevity.

*Zhuāngzǐ 13; cf. CTMP p.106, TT1 p.331*

The cycles of nature manifest in a continuous cycle of *dòng* and *jìng*. Likewise, practitioners of *nèidān* (inner alchemy) aim at creating a similar balance and harmony, but within themselves. All knowledge, both mystical and intellectual, springs from one source, from the one Energy (*yīqì*) of the *Dào*, but mystical knowledge or true wisdom arises in stillness, while intellectual or conceptual knowledge stems from an active mind. By tracing these two forms of knowledge back to their source, realization dawns that everything is a part of the *Dào* and is to be found within the body, and that these two ways of knowing can “sustain and augment” each other. *Dòng* and *jìng* are then unified, part of one whole. In his explanation of the *nèidān* text *Jīndān sībǎi zì* (‘Four Hundred Words on the Gold Elixir’), master Liú Yīmíng (1734–1821) says:

If you understand that the foundation of . . . true (mystical) knowledge (*zhēnzhī*) and reflected knowledge (*língzhī*) originates with the one Energy (*yīqì*), and if you cultivate them against the flow, . . . letting true knowledge dominate reflected knowledge, and using reflected knowledge to nurture true knowledge, then . . . they will sustain and augment each other, and movement (*dòng*) and stillness (*jìng*) will be as one. Then the mind is the *Dào*, the *Dào* is the mind, the mind is the mind of *Dào* (*dàoxīn*), and the body is the body of *Dào*. Then you will be as one with the qualities of heaven and earth, merged with the light of the sun and moon (*yáng* and *yīn*), and aligned with the order of the four seasons.

*Liú Yīmíng, Jīndān sībǎi zì jiě, ZW266, DS12*

In another of his writings, Liú Yīmíng uses the example of a box bellows to illustrate how movement and stillness are in harmony when they originate from the emptiness within:

A bellows (*tuóyuè*) has openings at both ends. On each opening there is a flap. Its inside is empty, while its body is straight. Its inner emptiness is its essence; the straightness of its body is what permits it to function. The two openings are the passages for exit and entry (of air). The two flaps are the mechanism for opening and closing (the box). The body (of the bellows) is moved back and forth to draw in and push out. It does not bend when it is empty; it produces wind when moving. Its opening and closing, its in and out, occur naturally.

As I observe this, I realize that this is the *dào* (way, principle) of essence and function in the cultivation of Truth (*xiūzhēn*). For human beings to be empty within is the essence. To be straightforward in mind is the function. If this is achieved, then there is no ego or desire, and the way of heaven flows and moves through them. Then their firmness and yielding are in proper balance; their action (*dòng*) and stillness (*jìng*) are fittingly combined; their directness and indirectness are balanced; their concealing and revealing are appropriate to the situation.

Then they participate and function in the same way as the *qì* (energy) of the Void, subject to the same creative and transformative (*zàohuà*) principles as heaven and earth. Just like a bellows (*tuóyuè*), which is empty within and straight in its body, they come and go, breathe in and out naturally, *qì* working unceasingly.

*Liú Yīmíng, Wùdào lù, ZW268, DS18*

Liú Yīmíng also uses the examples of a puppet and a kite to illustrate how movement and stillness in the human body are the result of life energy (*qì*) being controlled by spirit (*shén*), just as a puppet or kite is controlled by the person who manipulates the strings:

A puppet can nod its head before an audience and a kite can soar and fly in the sky because someone is pulling a string.

As I observe this, I realize that this is the *dào* (way, principle) of the spiritual functioning of movement (*dòng*) and stillness (*jìng*) of the human body.

The human body is lifeless like a puppet or a kite; the spirit (*shén*) is like a person; the life energy (*qì*) is like the string. When the spirit (*shén*) operates the energy (*qì*), the body becomes alive. It can be active (*dòng*) and it can be still (*jìng*), just like a person pulling the string of a puppet or a kite.

*Liú Yīmíng, Wùdào lù, ZW268, DS18*

See also: **dòng** (▶ 1), **qīngjìng**.

1. Yáng Dàoshēng, *Zhēnquán*, JY244, ZW373.

**jīnhuá** (C) *Lit.* golden (*jīn*) flower (*huá*); golden blossom; metaphorically, the inner spiritual awareness and light (*guāng*), which in its most sublime form is the *Dào*; in *nèidān* (inner alchemy), a symbol for the opening of *Dào*-consciousness, as in the budding and then blooming of a flower. In Daoist symbolism, gold symbolizes the intrinsic inner light of the original mind or spirit, and the flower represents the blossoming or opening up of that light.

The metaphor of the golden flower (*jīnhuá*) is a central image in the *Jīnhuá zōngzhǐ*, commonly translated as *The Secret of the Golden Flower*. Originating in the *nèidān* tradition, the text, probably written in the seventeenth century, is traditionally attributed to the Daoist immortal (*xiān*) Lǚ Dòngbīn (b.796 CE). The book is a lay manual concerning the spiritual practice by which the inner light may be experienced, and by means of which a practitioner can recover the golden flower of his own original nature. According to Thomas Cleary, one of its several translators:

The essential practice of the golden flower requires no apparatus, no philosophical or religious dogma, no special paraphernalia or ritual. It is practised in the course of daily life. It is near at hand, being in the mind itself, yet it involves no imagery or thought. It is remote only in the sense that it is a use of attention generally unfamiliar to the mind habituated to imagination and thinking.

*The Secret of the Golden Flower* is remarkable for the sharpness of its focus on a very direct method for self-realization accessible to ordinary lay people. When it was written down in a crisis more than two hundred years ago, it was a concentrated revival of an ancient teaching; and it has been periodically revived in crises since, due to the rapidity with which the method can awaken awareness of hidden resources in the mind.

Thomas Cleary, *Secret of the Golden Flower*, SGFC pp.2–3

Cleary goes on to point out the universal nature of the teaching it contains:

In Wilhelm's own introduction to his translation of *The Secret of the Golden Flower*, he notes that Daoist organizations following this teaching in his time included not only Confucians and Buddhists, but also Jews, Christians and Muslims, all without requiring them to break away from their own religious congregations. So fundamental is the golden-flower awakening that it brings out inner dimensions in all religions.

From the point of view of that central experience, it makes no more difference whether one calls the golden-flower awakening a relationship to God or to the Way, or whether one calls it the Holy Spirit or the *buddha*-nature or the real self. . . .

The image of the opening up of the golden flower of the light in the mind is used as but one of many ways of alluding to an effect that is really ineffable. The pragmatic purpose of Daoist and Buddhist teachings is to elicit experience, not to inculcate doctrines; that is why people of other religions, or with no religion at all, have been able to avail themselves of the psychoactive technologies of Daoism and Buddhism without destroying their own cultural identities.

Thomas Cleary, *Secret of the Golden Flower*, SGFC p.4

The text begins with the observation that the *Dào* is what it is – it is self-existent:

That which is naturally just so (*zìrán*) is called the *Dào*. The *Dào* is without name or form. It is the one Essence (*yīxìng*), the one (*yī*) original Spirit (*yuánshén*). Your (original) nature (*xìng*) and (true

spiritual) life (*mìng*) cannot be seen. They dwell within the light of heaven (*tiānguāng*). The light of heaven cannot be seen. It dwells within the two eyes. . . .

Following a directive, I have today the honour of being your guide (*shī*). First I will reveal to you the secret of the golden flower (*jīnhuá*) of the Absolute One (*tàiyī*), following which I will explain the rest in detail.

The Absolute One is that which has nothing beyond it. . . . The golden flower (*jīnhuá*) is the light (*guāng*). What colour is the light? The golden flower (*jīnhuá*) is a metaphor. It refers to the inherent (*xiāntiān*), true Energy (*zhēnqì*) of the Absolute One.

*Jīnhuá zōngzhǐ 1, JH94, JY161, XB1, ZW334*

The writer then continues by describing the means by which this light of the golden flower can be experienced. This method is known as “reversing the light (*huíguāng*)” – *i.e.* withdrawing one’s attention (one’s light) from the outer physical world and turning it towards the inner spiritual world during both daily life and spiritual practice:

The practice of reversing the light (*huíguāng*) is entirely related to the method of reversal (*nì*) in order to focus on the inherent mind (*tiānxīn*) that dwells within the sun and moon (between the eyes, at the transition between the physical and the spiritual, in the union of *yīn* and *yáng*). . . . Confucians call it the ‘centre of emptiness (*xūzhōng*)’; Buddhists call it the ‘plateau of consciousness (*língtái*)’; Daoists call it the ‘homeland (*zǔtǔ*)’, ‘yellow court (*huángtíng*)’, ‘mysterious pass (*xuánguān*)’, and ‘inherent opening (*xiāntiān qiào*)’.

The inherent mind (*tiānxīn*) is like a house. The light is the master of the house (*zhǔrénwēng*). When the light is reversed (*huíguāng*), all the body energies focus and ascend. . . . As long as you focus on reversing the light (*huíguāng*), that is the ultimate profound truth.

The light (*guāng*) is dynamic and difficult to stabilize. Only after it has been reversed (*huí*) for a long time, can the light be concentrated and focused in the natural (*zìrán*) spiritual body (*fǎshēn*), so that the spirit can be focused and can ascend nine-skies high (into the heavens). This is what is meant when the *Mind Seal Scripture* says “silently focus and ascend (*fěishēng*)”.<sup>1</sup>

The golden flower (*jīnhuá*) is the same as the gold elixir (*jīndān*), transformed into spiritual light (*shénmíng*) within the mind (*xīn*) of the adept (*shī*).

*Jīnhuá zōngzhǐ 1, JH94, JY161, XB1, ZW334*

After elucidating further details concerning the method of “reversing the light”, the writer says:



Since the beginning of creation, the light of *yáng* has been the master. In manifested form, it is the sun. In a human being, it is the eyes. And through the eyes flows the thinking spirit (*shíshén*, the thinking and knowing aspect of the mind, the intellect). This is the flow (of creation). So the way of the golden flower (*jīnhuá*) is, in sum, the method of reversal (*nì*).

The reversal of light (*huíguāng*) is not reversing the light of the body's vital essence (*jīnghuá*), but the complete withdrawal (*hut*) of the true Energy (*zhēnqì*) of creation (from the body). It is not momentary stillness among delusional thoughts, but the complete ending of thousands of aeons (S. *kalpas*) of reincarnations.

*Jīnhuá zōngzhǐ* 3, JH94, JY161, XB1, ZW334

In a later section of the book, the writer describes the experience of the budding and blossoming of the “golden flower (*jīnhuá*)”. To see the “silver moon . . . in the midst of heaven” is to see the light within oneself:

If, when there is stillness (*jìng*), the spirit has a continuous and uninterrupted sense of great joy, as if intoxicated or freshly bathed, this is a sign that the light principle (*yáng*) pervading the body is in harmony. Then the golden flower (*jīnhuá*) begins to bud.

Furthermore, when all openings are still (the mind is undisturbed by the senses), the silver moon stands in the midst of heaven, and you feel that the wide earth is a world of light and brilliancy, that is a sign that the substance of the mind (*xīn*) has opened itself to light (*míng*). It is a sign that the golden flower (*jīnhuá*) is opening.

Furthermore, when your whole embodiment (*biàntǐ*) is completely full (of light), you will fear neither storm nor frost. When you encounter things by which other men are made desolate, they cannot cloud the brightness of your pure spirit (*jīngshén*). Then yellow gold (*huángjīn*) fills the house and the steps are of white jade. Rotten and stinking things of earth are brought to life by just one small burst of the true Energy (*zhēnqì*). Red blood becomes milk. The fragile fleshly body becomes pure gold and diamonds. That is a sign that the golden flower (*jīnhuá*) has manifested (*níng*).

*Jīnhuá zōngzhǐ* 6, JH94, JY161; cf. SGFW pp.54–55

Popularized by the *Jīnhuá zōngzhǐ*, the metaphor has been used by later Daoist writers. Liú Yīmíng (1734–1821), a teacher in the *nèidān* tradition, describes the awakening awareness of the all-pervading presence of the *Dào* as a vision of “yellow shoots (*huángyá*)” and “golden flowers (*jīnhuá*)” covering the earth:

To be strong means to be single-mindedly pure and true (*chúnzhēn*), firm, powerful, and unwavering. . . . If you practise as described, it is like the sun in the sky. It shines on everything; everything is bathed in light, nothing is missed. Yellow shoots (*huángyá*) carpet the earth; golden flowers (*jīnhuá*) bloom everywhere. Wherever you go, the *Dào* is in everything. This is a great achievement.

*Liú Yīmíng, Zhōuyì (14) chǎnzhēn, DS13, ZW245*

Using the image of a blossoming lotus, master Lǚ Dòngbīn expresses something similar in one of his seven-character (*qīyán*) poems:

I smile when people ask me  
 where my home might be.  
 Riding on the lifting aether (*yúnwù*, spiritual energy),  
 I am immersed in spectacular radiance (*yānxiá*, spiritual light),  
 I speak not of the fire and lightning (*huǒdiàn*)  
 hidden between my eyes.  
 I boast not of the golden lotus (*jīnlián*)  
 blossoming in my hands.

*Lǚ Dòngbīn, Quán Tángshī 857:1.23, CTPQ*

Liú Yīmíng writes of the ready accessibility of the “golden flower” and the blessings of discovering it – but he says that it must be approached in the right manner:

The *Dào* is within reach; yet, alas, people seek far and wide for elaborate doctrines. The beautiful golden flower (*jīnhuá*) is constantly before your eyes; the seed of Truth is present in your body from birth. Being aware of how the moments fly by, reverse (your attention) and merge *yīn* and *yáng* (transcend duality); understanding the present moment, defy birth and death. But you cannot achieve this by speculation and guesswork. To learn it, you must hasten to seek the guidance of an enlightened master (*míngshī*).

*Liú Yīmíng, Wùdào lù, ZW268, DS18*

See also: **huíguāng** (8.5).

1. *Xīnyìn jīng, DZ13.*

**jiǔhuán, jiǔzhuǎn** (C) *Lit.* nine (*jiǔ*) returns (*huán, zhuǎn*); nine restorations; a Daoist *nèidān* (inner alchemy) term in which the number nine is used to symbolize the element (*xíng*) of metal, in which context it refers to completion,

wholeness, or perfection; hence, completion of the restoration or reversion process; also, according to the thirteenth-century *nèidān* text *Shortcuts (to Realization)* by Various Authors, nine stages in the *nèidān* process of refinement or purification of *jīng-qì-shén* (vital essence, subtle life energy, spirit).<sup>1</sup>

According to master Liú Yīmíng (1734–1821), the nine restorations refer specifically to the advanced stage of the *nèidān* process concerned with nurturing the spirit so that it can return to a state of emptiness. It is not to be confused with methods for stopping all thoughts while sitting in oblivion (*jìngzuò*).

Master Liú Yīmíng explains the meaning when responding to a disciple's question regarding the legend that the Buddhist missionary Bodhidharma (C5th or C6th) meditated facing a wall (*miànbì*) for nine years (*jiǔnián*) in a cave near the Shàolín Temple in northern China:

- Q. “Does the practice of facing the wall (*miànbì*) for nine years (*jiǔnián*) mean actually sitting in stillness (*jìngzuò*) for nine years?”
- A. “No. Nine years (*jiǔnián*) refers to the nine restorations (*jiǔhuán*). Facing the wall (*miànbì*) does not imply sitting (*zuòdìng*). It refers specifically to focusing the mind with undivided attention – until one is completely free of any residual impurity, as if one is facing a (blank) wall ten thousand measures high and is unable to see anything else. It means returning from the myriad ways (*wànfǎ*) to emptiness (*kōng*). It is a method of cultivating the infant (*yīng'ér*, inherent spiritual awareness and potential), freeing the *yáng* spirit and letting it transcend – not the improper practice of sitting in stillness (*jìngzuò*) to stop thoughts. So facing the wall (*miànbì*) is to nurture the spirit, and nine years (*jiǔnián*) refers to the nine restorations (*jiǔzhuān*).”

Liú Yīmíng, *Xiūzhēn biànnán*, ZW260, DS6

*jiǔhuán* is associated with a similar metaphorical term *qīfǎn* (seven reversions):

Spirit (*shén*) together with life energy (*qì*) and vital essence (*jīng*) are the three highest medicines. Refining vital essence (*jīng*) into energy (*qì*), refining energy into spirit (*shén*), and refining spirit to merge with the *Dào* – this is the essential secret of the seven reversions (*qīfǎn*) and nine restorations (*jiǔhuán*).

Chén Chōngsù, *Chén Xūbái guīzhōng zhǐnán*, DZ243 12a, JY211

Master Zhāng Bódūān (C11th) explains the significance of the numbers seven and nine, which – in a complex system of relationships between the five elements, various numbers, and *yīn* and *yáng* – are the *yáng* numbers for ‘fire’ and ‘metal’ respectively. In *nèidān* symbolism, it is necessary to

restore *yáng* to its full spiritual potential before it is possible to recover the “gold elixir (*jīndān*)” of one’s original spiritual nature:

In the term ‘seven reversions (*qīfǎn*) and nine restorations (*jiǔhuán*)’ of the great elixir of golden liquid, the number seven is used to symbolize fire. The number nine is used to symbolize metal. Metal that is refined by fire to revert to the Source and restore the Origin is called the gold elixir (*jīndān*).

*Zhāng Bóduān, Jīndān sībǎi zì, DZ1081*

Master Lǐ Dàochún (C13th) also provides an explanation of the meaning, but cautions against being distracted by the numbers, since they are merely metaphors, open to misinterpretation:

Recently compiled alchemical books are mostly full of fallacies (*pángmén*). Their interpretations of seven reversions (*qīfǎn*) and nine restorations (*jiǔhuán*) as the practice of timing and numbering particular locations in the physical body are misconceptions. That is why I have compiled thirty-six questions and answers to highlight the essence of the alchemical books, in order to clear confusion for later students.

**Q.** What is meant by the ‘nine restorations (*jiǔhuán*)’?

**A.** Nine is the number associated with metal. ‘Restoration’ means to return to the Origin by using original inner nature (*xìng*) to capture the passions (*qíng*). Passions (*qíng*) are associated with metal. The return of the passions (*qíng*) to original inner nature (*xìng*) is therefore called ‘nine restorations’. Alchemical books say, “Metal returning to original inner nature (*xìng*) is called ‘restoration of the elixir’.” It does not mean counting from one to nine, and restarting on reaching nine.

**Q.** What is meant by ‘seven reversions (*qīfǎn*)’?

**A.** Seven is the number associated with fire. ‘Reversion’ means to revert to the Source by refining spirit (*liànshén*) back into emptiness (*xū*). Spirit (*shén*) is associated with fire. Refined spirit (*liànshén*) reverting to emptiness (*xū*) is called ‘seven reversions’. It does not mean counting from three to nine, and restarting on reaching the seventh number (which is nine).

*Lǐ Dàochún, Zhōnghé jí, DZ249, JY226*

See also: **jiǔnián** (8.5), **qīfǎn**.

1. *Zázhù jiējìng*, in *Xiūzhēn shíshū*, DZ263 17:1a; cf. in *CPMS* p.345 (n.268).

**jīūzhuǎn** (C) *Lit.* nine (jiǔ) returns (zhuǎn). See **jīūhuán**.

**jīvanmukti** (S/H) *Lit.* liberation (*mukti*) while living (*jīvan*); salvation, deliverance or redemption of the soul during the present life; liberation from birth and death while still living as a human being; hence, *jīvanmukta* (one who is liberated).

According to the *Upanishads*, everything that exists is a part of *Brahman*, the supreme Self. The purpose of life is to realize the mystic Truth – by knowing which everything is known – while still living in a human body. This is *jīvanmukti*. Hence, the *Kena Upanishad* says:

If It is realized here, then there is truth;

If It is not realized here, then great is the loss.

*Kena Upanishad* 2:5

Indian philosophy, including Buddhism and Jainism, speaks of two kinds of *mukti* – *jīvanmukti* and *videhamukti* (incorporeal *mukti*, or liberation after release from the body at death) – although the ideal of *jīvanmukti* is not universally accepted. Buddhism, Jainism, *Sāṃkhya* and *yoga*, as well as the philosophers Shankara, Vijñānabhikṣu and Vallabha all accept the possibility that although those who have attained *jīvanmukti* continue to live out their human lives according to their *karma*, yet they remain pure and unsullied by it.

*Nyāya* and *Vaisheshika*, on the other hand, do not recognize the ideal of *jīvanmukti*. Some scholars, however – basing their thinking on Vātsyāyana's *Nyāya Sūtra Bhāṣya*<sup>1</sup> – have pointed out that while *jīvanmukti* is not formally recognized and liberation is believed to come only after death, *Nyāya* does admit a stage corresponding to *jīvanmukti*, in which a person has shed delusion and attained enlightenment, and wherein none of his actions are tainted with selfishness.<sup>2</sup>

Rāmānuja, Nimbārka, Madhva and other well-known philosophers of the past have also believed only in *videhamukti*, maintaining that for as long as the soul (*ātman*) remains in the body, it remains tainted by traces of spiritual ignorance (*ajñāna*). They say that complete absorption in *Brahman* is only possible after the *ātman*'s connection with the body has been finally severed. Various verses from the *Upanishads* are quoted in support of this assertion. For example:

(Says the disciple:) I shall remain here (on earth) only so long as I am not liberated; after that I shall attain perfection.

*Chhāndogya Upanishad* 6:14.2

Primal matter is perishable; God is immortal and imperishable. The one God rules over both the perishable and the soul. By meditation

upon Him, by union with Him, by becoming one with Him, complete cessation from all illusion is attained.

*Shvetāshvatara Upanishad 1:10*

As flowing rivers merge into the ocean, losing name and form,  
so the wise man, free of name and form,  
goes to the supreme Being, the highest of the high.

*Muṇḍaka Upanishad 3:2.8*

But whether the writers of these *Upanishads* are being correctly interpreted is difficult to say. These verses are not specifically about *jīvanmukti* or *videhamukti*, and can be taken either way. In any case, the most important thing is to attain *jīvanmukti*, and then to be in a position to understand the situation for oneself.

Later Indian saints have generally agreed with the principle of *jīvanmukti*. Ravidās says that it is obtained through the practice of the mystic Name:

As ghee is obtained by churning milk,  
so *jīvanmukti* is obtained by repeating the Lord's Name.

*Ravidās, Shri Sant Rohidās 85:11, SSR p.210*

Since conscious contact with this Name or creative power is the gift of a master, the devotee always gives the credit to his master for his liberation:

My master has ended my coming and going:  
the desires of my mind are over.  
Now I have attained liberation in this very life (*jīvanmukt*).

*Malūkdās, Bānī, Shabd 1:5, MDB p.1*

See also: **jīvanmukta** (7.1), **nirvāṇa**.

1. Vātsyāyana, *Nyāya Sūtra Bhāṣya* 4:2.2.
2. M. Hiriyanna, *Outlines of Indian Philosophy, OIP* pp.19, 266; Swami Prabhavananda, *Spiritual Heritage of India, SHI* p.207.

**jñāna** (S), **gyān** (H/Pu), **ñāṇa** (Pa), **ye shes** (T), **zhì** (C), **chi** (J) *Lit.* knowledge; mental or intellectual knowledge, understanding, wisdom, intuition; also, mystic or inwardly revealed knowledge; knowledge or understanding that becomes manifested within a heightened consciousness; spiritual knowledge, spiritual wisdom, spiritual enlightenment, gnosis; in the Hindu tradition, sometimes contrasted with *bhakti* (love and devotion). Like the word 'knowledge', *jñāna* and *gyān* are used in many contexts, the meaning depending upon the context and intention of the writer.

### *In the Hindu Tradition*

The *Taittirīya Upanishad* equates *jñāna* with *Brahman* itself, for the One who is the source of mystical revelation and consciousness is Itself that very consciousness or gnosis:

He who knows *Brahman* as real (*satya*),  
as knowledge (*jñāna*) and as infinite (*ananta*),  
dwelling in the secret place of the heart and in the highest heaven –  
He, being one with the omniscient *Brahman*,  
attains fulfilment of all desires.

*Taittirīya Upanishad 2:1.1*

The *Upanishads* also point out that trying to understand the nature of *Brahman* by means of intellect is fruitless, for the effort only creates the duality of knower and known:

A person wanting to know what *jñāna* (wisdom) and *jñeya* (the object to be known) are will not be able to attain his desired end, even though he may study the scriptures for 1,000 years. That which is alone should be known as the indestructible. That which exists (in this world) is only impermanent.

*Paingala Upanishad 4:16–17; cf. TMU p.41*

In fact, *Brahman* is what It is, and no description is adequate:

This (*Brahman*) is neither internal nor external consciousness; It is neither gross, nor wisdom (*jñāna*), nor ignorance (*ajñāna*). Nor is It the state between the waking and the dreaming states. It cannot be known by the sense organs; It is not subject to proof; It is within. He who knows that which is by Itself alone is an emancipated person.

*Nārada-parivṛājaka Upanishad 9; cf. TMU p.131*

But the meaning of the term depends upon the context. *Jñāna* as true gnosis or mystical experience of *Brahman* is regarded as the goal of the spiritual path. It is the burden of past sins or *karma* that stands between the soul and its enlightenment. Understanding *jñāna* in this context, the *Yogatattva Upanishad* maintains that although spiritual practice (*yoga*) is essential, *jñāna* is actually the final goal and the only means of salvation:

How can *jñāna* that is capable of bestowing *moksha* (liberation) arise without *yoga*? For even *yoga* becomes powerless in (securing) *moksha* when it is devoid of *jñāna*. So the seeker of emancipation must practise both *yoga* and *jñāna*. The cycle of births and deaths only comes about through *ajñāna* (spiritual ignorance) and only ends through *jñāna*. In

the beginning, *jñāna* alone existed. It should be known as the only means (of salvation). That is that *jñāna* through which one inwardly realizes the real nature of *kaivalya* (absolute Oneness) as the supreme Source, the Stainless, the Indivisible, and of the nature of *sach-chid-ānanda* (truth-consciousness-bliss) – without birth, existence and death, and without motion.

*Yogatattva Upanishad 14–18; cf. TMU pp.147–48*

The *Bhagavad Gītā* has much to say on the subject. Firstly, it points out that human passions obscure spiritual understanding:

Wisdom (*jñāna*) is veiled by this ever-present enemy of the wise –  
the insatiable fire of lust (*kāma*).

The senses, the mind and reason are said to be its seat.

With these it veils wisdom (*jñāna*), deluding the embodied spirit.

Therefore, control your senses at the very outset,

and slay this foul enemy –

The destroyer of all wisdom (*jñāna*) and knowledge (*viñāna*).

*Bhagavad Gītā 3:39–41; cf. BGT*

*Jñāna* is portrayed as the ultimate goal of spiritual evolution, for the Divine is supreme wisdom or intelligence Itself:

The Light of lights is said to be beyond darkness.

He is knowledge (*jñāna*) itself –

That which is to be known (*jñeya*),

and the goal of knowledge (*jñāna*),

dwelling in the heart of everything.

*Bhagavad Gītā 13:17*

*Jñāna* is understood as both the goal and the path. It is attained by association with realized souls:

All holy work, without exception, culminates in wisdom (*jñāna*).

Know that by approaching with reverence

those wise ones (*jñānī*) who have realized the Truth,

and by asking questions of them, and by serving them –

They will teach you that wisdom (*jñāna*) by knowing which,

you will see all creation in the Self (*Ātman*) and in Me,

and never again be deluded.

Even if you were the worst of sinners among sinners,

you will cross the sea of evil on the ship of wisdom (*jñāna*).

Just as a blazing fire reduces wood to ashes,

so does the fire of wisdom reduce all *karma* to ashes.



Truly, there is nothing in this world so purifying as wisdom (*jñāna*).  
 He who has attained perfection in *yoga*,  
     in time discovers it by himself within his own self.  
 He who has devotion and zeal for it, who has deep faith,  
     and who has controlled his senses, finds wisdom (*jñāna*),  
     and having attained that wisdom (*jñāna*),  
     is soon established in supreme peace.  
 But an ignorant man, devoid of faith and of a doubting nature is lost.  
 For such a man of doubt, there is no happiness in this world or the next.

O Arjuna, he who purifies his deeds through *yoga*,  
     who has destroyed his doubts by wisdom (*jñāna*),  
     and who is focused in the Self (*Ātman*),  
     is no longer bound by his deeds.  
 Therefore, with the sword of wisdom (*jñāna*),  
     cut away this doubt concerning the Self (*Ātman*),  
     which is born of ignorance (*ajñāna*).  
 Take refuge in *yoga*:  
 Arise, great warrior (*bhārata*), arise!

*Bhagavad Gītā 4:33–42*

The fruit of such wisdom is permanent release from bondage not only to birth and death, but also to the cycles of creation and dissolution:

I will tell you again of that supreme wisdom (*jñāna*),  
     the most exalted of all wisdom (*jñāna*),  
     having known which all sages have passed from here,  
     and attained supreme perfection.  
 Those who have devoted themselves to this wisdom (*jñāna*),  
     and have attained union with Me,  
     are not born again at the start of a new creation,  
     nor are they troubled by dissolution (*pralaya*).

*Bhagavad Gītā 14:1–2*

Therefore, says Kṛishṇa in the concluding chapter:

I have imparted to you a wisdom (*jñāna*)  
     more profound than all profundities.  
 Reflecting upon it in its entirety, do as you think fit.

*Bhagavad Gītā 18:63*

Other Indian mystics and philosophers have conveyed the same understanding. Gaudapāda writes of *jñāna* and *Brahman* as being one:

Knowledge (*jñāna*), which is unborn and free from imagination, is described (by the wise) as ever inseparable from the knowable. The immutable and birthless *Brahman* is the goal of knowledge (*jñāna*). The birthless is known by the birthless.

*Gauḍapāda, Kārikā 3:33 on Māṇḍūkya Upanishad, U2 p.302*

The *Shiva Saṃhitā* similarly understands *jñāna* as the supreme mystical experience itself:

*Jñāna* alone is eternal; it is without beginning or end; there exists no other real substance. The diversities we see in the world are the results of senses; when the latter cease, then this *jñāna* alone, and nothing else, remains.

*Shiva Saṃhitā 1:1; cf. SSV p.1*

The ninth-century Shankara regarded *jñāna* as the ultimate path to the liberation of the soul:

As fire is to cooking, so is there no liberation (*moksha*) without wisdom (*jñāna*). Compared to all other means, knowledge (*bodha*) of the self is the only way of liberation (*moksha*).

*Shankara, Ātmabodha 2; cf. ABSC p.4, SKS p.156*

Among more recent mystics, Ramakrishna (1836–1886) understood the pure soul to be wisdom or knowledge itself:

This pure *ātman* alone is our real nature. What is *jñāna*? It is to know one's own self and keep the mind in It. It is to know the pure *ātman*.

*Ramakrishna, in SKS p.vi*

The sixteenth-century Mīrābāī sings:

I have discarded both honour and dishonour:  
now I wish to tread the path of *gyān*.

*Mīrābāī, Shabdāvalī, Birah aur prem kā ang, Shabd 18:1, MBS p.10*

And:

You have received a precious human life,  
and you will not get it again.

Now sing only of the Lord:

with this rare opportunity, attain (true) *gyān*.

*Mīrābāī, Shabdāvalī, Chetāvanī kā ang, Shabd 2:1, MBS p.1*

The eighteenth-century Sahajobāi writes that such *gyān* is a gift:

I have taken the boat of *gyān*:  
 my *guru*, Charandās, the boatman, has given it to me.  
*Sahajobāi, Bānī, Satguru mahimā kā ang 5, SBB p.1*

Guru Nānak (1469–1539) says that mystical *gyān* is the result of contact with the divine Melody or creative power:

Know that from the vibration of the Word (*Dhun*),  
 we obtain spiritual wisdom (*giān*) and meditation (*dhiān*).  
 Through it, we speak the Unspoken (*Akath*).  
*Guru Nānak, Ādi Granth 59, AGK*

In everyday language, *gyān* signifies all knowledge acquired by the mind. This covers all intellectual and scientific knowledge. Esoterically, however, the knowledge gained by ascent into the inner regions of the mind (astral and causal) is also *gyān*. This knowledge or gnosis is superior to intellectual knowledge, being gained by direct vision or perception. It is real mystic knowledge, but, being still within the limits of the higher mind, it does not entail union with God or God-realization.

In knowledge, there is always likely to be an element of the knower and the known. Knowledge thus implies duality and, in a literal sense, can only exist where there is separation and division. A number of Indian saints have therefore regarded it as inferior to love or *bhakti*, which entails merging into the Divine and the loss of personal identity.

Their point is that, since the universal mind is the primary architect of all duality and division, *gyān* is actually an attribute of the higher mind, while *bhakti* is a quality of the soul. *Bhakti*, being the deepest quality of both soul and God, is therefore a higher path, for perfect love and surrender leads to union with the Supreme. This is Dādū's meaning when he writes:

I drank from the cup in the hands of my beloved Lord.  
 This is not obtained by *yoga*, *gyān*, or *mudrā*.  
 It is something quite different from all these.  
 When I surrendered my body, mind and soul to the true master,  
 I saw my beloved within myself, and met him face to face.  
*Dādū Dayāl, in Ghaṭ Rāmāyaṇ 2, Shabd 1:6–10, GR2 p.8*

Even so, in perfect union with the Supreme who is all-knowing, the attainment of ultimate and eternal knowledge, as the perfect experience of God or God-realization, is automatically achieved. Knowledge and love are then understood as part of the same experience. Thus, although a distinction

is sometimes made between *gyān* and *bhakti*, the highest form of mystic knowledge or *gyān* is union with the Divine, which is also the culmination of *bhakti* or love. In this sense, as the *Upanishads* point out, there is no difference between the two.

Maharaj Sawan Singh explains that spiritual life is founded on both *bhakti* and *gyān*, for ultimately they both become merged in experience of the One:

People generally do not consider that knowledge (*gyān*) and love are necessary for spiritual life, and they select either the path of love or that of knowledge (*gyān*), according to their inclination. There are others who consider the path of action to be the true path, and therefore spend their life in doing good deeds for others. Actually, both knowledge (*gyān*) and love should completely combine and manifest themselves in the form of good actions.

Love and knowledge (*gyān*) awaken discernment in us, as a result of which virtuous actions are performed spontaneously. Love and knowledge (*gyān*) are really not two different paths, but the combination of these two is the very core of life. They are also the beauty of life and in their combination lies true life. They are the two sides of one Truth, the two wings of the same bird. If true knowledge (*gyān*) is awakened or developed, the river of real love immediately begins to flow.

The heart is the haven of love. For the One whom our intellect wishes to know by means of knowledge (*gyān*), our heart tries to feel true love. We can meet that One by means of knowledge (*gyān*), but real union can be attained only through love. Knowledge (*gyān*) takes us up to that One, but love makes us merge into Him. Those who consider it sufficient to meet Him cannot experience the ecstasy of merging into Him. There is no difference between love and true knowledge (*gyān*)...

One has to surrender oneself to God. Then there is nothing but God. This is love. This is knowledge (*gyān*). You may think about this and you may even carefully discuss it, but you will not find any difference between true knowledge (*gyān*) and love.

The heart is given away and it makes its centre in the Beloved and remains fixed there. This is true knowledge (*gyān*). Knowledge (*gyān*) does not mean merely to understand or to know. It actually means to *become* that which we really are, *i.e.* to know ourselves...

The highest type of love for the lover is to live in the will of the Beloved. If we imbibe this quality, we attain true knowledge (*gyān*). Those who are entangled in desires and in greed cannot achieve true knowledge (*gyān*).

To know God, in other words, is to love Him and to merge into Him, to be filled with His unique beauty and to become one with Him.

*Maharaj Sawan Singh, Philosophy of the Masters, PMS2 pp.205–7*

### In Jainism

Jainism commonly enumerates five forms of wisdom or knowledge, experienced as the soul passes through corresponding modes (*paryāya*) or transformations (*pariṇāma*) in the course of its spiritual evolution. Each is affected by a corresponding kind of concealing or veiling (*āvaraṇīya*) *karma*. According to Jainism, the soul (*jīva*) itself possesses infinite *jñāna* and *darshana* (perception, vision), but this is obscured by the concealing *karma*. *Darshana* is described as a generalized knowledge or perception of something, while *jñāna* includes knowledge of its details. Thus, when something is first encountered, a person will have only an overall or general impression of it, but later on, he may acquire a detailed knowledge. But all forms of knowledge are understood as inherent to the mind and soul. *Jñāna* is not external to the self; it is an innate aspect of the self. The five forms of *jñāna* are:

1. *Mati-jñāna*. *Lit.* sense knowledge; knowledge acquired through the mind and senses; a form of knowledge available to all creatures; limited to knowledge of material things.
2. *Shruta-jñāna*. *Lit.* knowledge that is heard; knowledge associated with language, discursive reasoning, symbols, and gestures; knowledge derived from reading and from scriptures. Most human beings function only within the sphere of these first two forms of knowledge.
3. *Avadhi-jñāna*. *Lit.* limited knowledge; knowledge limited to a certain range; extrasensory knowledge; clairvoyance; knowledge innate to heavenly and hellish beings, but which can be developed in human beings by *yoga* and other spiritual practices.
4. *Manah-paryāya-jñāna*. *Lit.* knowledge of another's mind and thoughts; telepathy; attainable through spiritual practice, through the development of *saṁyama* (self-control).
5. *Kevala-jñāna*. *Lit.* absolute knowledge; knowledge of the Absolute, knowledge of everything, unlimited knowledge; omniscience; knowledge of all *dravyas* (things or substances), including the soul in all its many modes of expression; complete knowledge, unlimited by the past, present or future, or by any other constraint; the natural knowledge of the soul in its pure and unfettered state. This is the knowledge of the mystics or sages.

Sometimes, eight forms of knowledge are enumerated in Jain philosophy, the other three being forms of false knowledge (*mithyā-jñāna*) – invalid, erroneous, and incorrect knowledge. Jain philosophers have further analysed and subdivided these categories of *jñāna*.

### ***In Buddhism***

In Buddhism, depending on the context, *jñāna* conveys much the same spread of meaning as it does in the Jain and Hindu traditions. It can refer either to mundane knowledge, to the conceptual understanding of various teachings, or to mystical gnosis and awareness. Sometimes it is used synonymously with *bodhi* (enlightenment). It can be similar in meaning to *prajñā* (wisdom), but is generally used in more specific contexts. Buddhist scholars and epistemologists have also classified *jñāna* into various categories.

*Jñāna* and the Pali *ñāṇa* are two of the most commonly occurring terms in Buddhist literature, found in a wide range of contexts. Since the essence of mystical experience is direct knowledge or awareness of Reality (however It may be conceived), it is no surprise to find the two words in many compound terms for particular kinds or aspects of knowledge and gnosis. *Jñāna* also appears in the titles of many ancient Buddhist texts, as in the *Jñānaprashthāna* ('Foundations of Knowledge'), the primary text of the *Abhidharma Piṭaka* of the *Sarvāstivāda* school. Such compound terms include:

*Jñāna-kāya* (S. wisdom body, body of gnosis). A *Mahāyāna* concept, *jñāna-kāya* is one of the two aspects of the *dharmakāya*, the essentially eternal, enlightened and all-pervading Truth- or Reality-form of a *buddha*. The *jñāna-kāya* is the omniscience of a *buddha*, while the second aspect, the *svābhāvika-kāya*, is a *buddha*'s inherent nature. There are a number of differing conceptual doctrines in *Mahāyāna*, *Yogācāra* and Tibetan Buddhism concerning the nature of the *dharmakāya*, *jñāna-kāya*, and *svābhāvika-kāya*. See **svābhāvika-kāya** (7.2).

*Jñāna-mudrā* (S. knowledge seal; T. *ye shes phyag rgya*). In the Tibetan *anuttara-yoga tantra*, an imagined or visualized sexual partner. See also: **mahāmudrā** (8.5).

*Jñāna-pāramitā* (S. perfection of awareness). In some *Mahāyāna* texts, notably the *Dashabhūmika Sūtra*, *jñāna* is the last of ten *pāramitās* (perfections), the virtues and characteristics to be cultivated by a *bodhisattva*. *Jñāna-pāramitā* is related to the *dharmamegha-bhūmi* (cloud of *dharmā* level), the last of the ten *bhūmis* (levels) that are successively attained by a *bodhisattva*. *Jñāna* as the primal wisdom or gnosis concerning all things is the virtue associated with this final *bhūmi*. See also: **pāramitā** (►4).

*Jñāna-sattva* (S. wisdom being). A tantric term for the manifestation of the actual being, such as a deity or celestial *bodhisattva*, that a practitioner visualizes or imagines during meditation. When concentration is such that the visualized being (*samaya-sattva*, promised being) is perfectly visualized, then the *jñāna-sattva*, the actual being, is invited to come

from his or her celestial abode and merge with his or her visualized form. See **samaya-sattva** (8.5).

*Advaya-jñāna* (S. non-dual knowledge). In Buddhism, mystical gnosis that transcends the duality of subject-object or perceiver-perceived, which characterizes all perceptions at the sensory level. See **advaya-jñāna**.

*Anutpāda-jñāna* (S. knowledge of non-arising). Certainty that the ten fetters (*saṃyojana*), the afflictions (*kleshas*) and the impurities (*āsravas*) will not arise again; one of the two kinds of *jñāna* that accompany liberation from birth and death, the other being *kshaya-jñāna* (knowledge that the *kleshas* have been eliminated). See **anutpāda-jñāna**.

*Ārya-jñāna* (S. noble knowledge, noble intelligence). When contrasted with *ārya-prajñā* (noble wisdom), *ārya-jñāna* refers to an intuitive understanding of mystical matters, while *ārya-prajñā* implies true mystical gnosis.

*Dasha-jñāna* (S. ten knowledges). Ten forms of knowledge, drawn from the Buddhist Pali *suttas* and classified by the Sanskrit *Abhidharma*. See **dasha-jñāna**.

*Dhammaṭṭhiti-ñāṇa* (Pa. knowledge concerning the nature of phenomena). Insight into or understanding of the causal nature (*ṭhiti*) of the relationship between phenomena (*dhamma*). See **dhammaṭṭhiti-ñāṇa**.

*Ekādashā-jñāna* (S. eleven knowledges). Eleven forms of knowledge, of which ten were drawn from the Buddhist Pali *suttas* and classified by the Sanskrit *Abhidharma*, and an eleventh was added by *Mahāyāna* sources. See **dasha-jñāna**.

*Kshaya-jñāna* (S. knowledge of elimination). Certainty that the ten fetters (*saṃyojana*), the afflictions (*kleshas*) and the impurities (*āsravas*) have been eliminated; one of the two kinds of *jñāna* that accompany liberation from birth and death, the other being *anutpāda-jñāna* (knowledge that the *kleshas* will not arise again). See **kshaya-jñāna**.

*Gotrabhū-ñāṇa* (Pa. knowledge of one who has overcome the heritage). The knowledge, wisdom or insight of one who has overcome or changed the ancestry, lineage, heritage (*gotra*) or habit of the *puthujjanas* (worldly ones) and has entered the heritage of the *ariya-puggalas* (noble people), having enlightenment (*nibbāna*) as his goal; the insight of one who has consciously broken the mould or habit of worldliness and is firmly established on the spiritual path. See **gotrabhū-ñāṇa**.

*Mithyā-jñāna* (S. erroneous knowledge). Incorrect cognition or perception; can be either conceptual or actual; a term prevalent in Jain, Buddhist, and Hindu traditions. See **mithyā-jñāna**.

*Ñāṇa-dassana* (Pa), *jñāna-darshana* (S). Knowledge and vision; knowledge that sees, directly perceived knowledge; gnosis and inner vision; direct personal vision and awareness of the inner truths of the spiritual path, which supplants all reasoned, intellectual and conceptual knowledge. See **ñāṇa-dassana**.

*Nānādhimuttika-ñāṇa* (Pa. knowledge of aspirations). Knowledge of the hopes and desires of living beings; one of the ten *dasa-bala* (Pa. ten powers) attributed to a *buddha*. Other powers include knowledge of the effects and consequences of actions; knowledge of previous lives, even stretching back into previous expansions and contractions of the universe; knowledge of all the stages of the various meditative concentrations (*samādhis*); and so on.<sup>1</sup> See **dasha-bala** (7.3).

*Nirvikalpa-jñāna* (S. unconditioned knowledge). Mystical knowledge or gnosis without distinction or duality; awareness without any overlay of the duality of knower and known that is normally present in other forms of awareness or knowing; undifferentiated, non-conceptual, directly experiential, mystical gnosis or knowledge of Reality; pure awareness in the absence of concepts, judgments and discriminative thinking. See **nirvikalpa jñāna**.

*Pañcha-jñāna* (S. five wisdoms). Five pure non-conceptualizing forms of awareness that are facets of perfect enlightenment (*bodhi*); a concept developed by the *Yogāchāra* school of *Mahāyāna* Buddhism, and elaborated upon in tantric Buddhism. See **pañcha-jñāna**.

*Parassa ceto-pariya-, pubbe-nivāsa-, cutūpapāta-ñāṇa* (Pa). Three of the six *abhiññās* (S) or *abhiññās* (Pa). The *abhiññās* are six supernormal forms of intuitive knowledge, awareness or ability developed by means of concentration (*samādhi*) and contemplation (*jhāna*), and said to be among the attributes of a *buddha*, *tathāgata*, or *arahanta*. These three are:

1. *Parassa ceto-pariya-ñāṇa* (Pa), *cetaḥ-paryāya-jñāna* (S), or *para-chitta-jñāna* (S). Penetrating (*pariya*) knowledge (*ñāṇa*, *jñāna*) of another's (*para*, *parassa*, *paryāya*) thoughts (*ceta*, *chitta*) or mind; awareness of the thinking processes of others, acquired, according to the *Yoga Sūtras* of Patañjali, by focused attention (*saṃyama*) upon the mental processes of others.<sup>2</sup>



2. *Pubbe-nivāsa-ñāṇa* (Pa). Knowledge (*ñāṇa*) of one's former (*pubba*) abodes or habitations (*nivāsa*), *i.e.* remembrance of one's past lives. It is said that a *buddha* has the ability to recall all his past lives; in others, this awareness is limited.
3. *Cutūpapāta-ñāṇa* or *yathākammūpaga-ñāṇa* (Pa). Knowledge (*ñāṇa*) of disappearance and reappearance (*cutūpapāta*) or knowledge (*ñāṇa*) according to (*yathā*) the result of (*upaga*) actions (*kamma*); it implies knowledge of the death and rebirth of all sentient beings, in accordance with their good and bad deeds (*kamma*), also described as the divine eye (*dibba-cakkhu*) or universal vision that sees all that is happening in heaven and earth, whether near or far, including the *kamma* of all beings.

*Samāhita-jñāna* (S. knowledge in equipoise). The wisdom of meditative equipoise; the wisdom, gnosis or mystical insight of a supremely concentrated, composed, and collected mind. See **samāhita-jñāna**.

*Sammā-ñāṇa* (Pa. right knowledge, right gnosis). The ninth of ten attributes possessed by an *arahanta* (noble one, enlightened one), being an addition to the standard eight attributes of the noble eightfold path. The eight attributes normally listed begin with right view (*sammā-dṛiṣṭi*) and culminate in right concentration (*sammā-samādhi*). To these, the *Mahācattārīsaka Sutta* of the *Majjhima Nikāya*<sup>3</sup> adds two more – *sammā-ñāṇa* (right gnosis) and *sammā-vimutti* (right liberation) – since *samādhi* leads to gnosis, which leads on to liberation from the cycle of birth and death. See also: **āryāṣṭāṅga-mārga** (►4).

*Sarvajña-jñāna* (S. omniscient wisdom). The all-knowing wisdom, knowledge, consciousness, or awareness of a *buddha*. See **sarvajñāna**, **sarvajña** (7.3).

*Sacca-ñāṇa* (Pa. knowledge of truth). Wisdom or understanding of the four noble truths (*ariya-sacca*), understood either intellectually or through mystical realization.

*Sutamaya-*, *cintāmaya-*, *bhāvanāmaya-ñāṇa* (Pa). The three forms of *dhamma-abhiññā*, which refers to the knowledge or wisdom by which the things relating to the *Dhamma* (Way, teachings) are understood. Specifically:

1. *Sutamaya-ñāṇa*. Knowledge (*ñāṇa*) acquired by (*maya*) learning (*suta*).

2. *Cintāmaya-ñāṇa*. Knowledge acquired by reasoning and thought (*cintā*).

3. *Bhāvanāmaya-ñāṇa*. Knowledge acquired by meditation (*bhāvanā*). This is further subdivided into *anubodha-ñāṇa* and *pañivedha-ñāṇa*. *Anubodha-ñāṇa* (understanding knowledge) is an outer, theoretical understanding of the truths of the *Dhamma*. *Pañivedha-ñāṇa* (penetration knowledge) is inner realization of the true meaning of the *Dhamma*, rather than its expression in language.

*Vipassanā-ñāṇa* (Pa. insight-knowledge). Preliminary forms of understanding that lead a practitioner from awareness of the distinction between mind and body, the relationship between the two, the impermanence of physical and mental phenomena, and so on, through to *gotrabhū-ñāṇa* (the fourteenth stage) as the conscious affirmation of the desire to follow the spiritual path to its culmination, and enter finally into the supramundane or transcendental path that leads to *nibbāna*.<sup>4</sup> See *vipassanā-ñāṇa*.

See also: **abhiññā** (7.3), **avadhi-jñāna** (7.3), **bodhisattva** (7.1), **kevala-jñāna**, **manañ-paryāya-jñāna** (7.3), **mati-jñāna**, **shruta-jñāna**, **trikāya** (7.2), **vijñāna**, **zhì**.

1. *Majjhima Nikāya* 12, *Mahāsīhanāda Sutta*, *PTSM1* pp.69–71; *Anguttara Nikāya* 10:21, *Sīhanāda Sutta*, *PTSA5* pp.32–36.
2. Patañjali, *Yoga Sūtras* 3:19.
3. *Majjhima Nikāya* 117, *Mahācattārīsaka Sutta*, *PTSM3* pp.76–78.
4. Buddhaghosa, *Visuddhimagga* 20–22, *PTSV* pp.606–97.

**jōbutsu** (J), **chéngfó** (C) *Lit.* becoming (*jō*, *chéng*) a *buddha* (*butsu*, *fó*); attaining buddhahood, becoming enlightened. According to *Zen* teaching, because all beings are already *buddhas*, but unrealized, one cannot in fact *become* a *buddha*. It only appears so to a previously unenlightened being. The term appears in a number of compounds, such as *kenshō jōbutsu* (realizing one's nature and becoming a *buddha*) and *sokushin jōbutsu* (becoming a *buddha* in this very body).

See also: **sokushin jōbutsu**.

**jōriki** (J), **dìnglì** (C) *Lit.* power of concentration; the strength and power of a concentrated mind, developed through *zazen* (sitting meditation); the ability

to remain in a state of deep one-pointed concentration for a long time; the power of a focused mind to handle all the circumstances of life fearlessly and confidently, always doing the right thing without losing one's balance; can lead to the development of supranormal powers (S. *siddhis*), such as the divine eye (S. *divya-chakshus*) or the power to preserve one's body after death; known in Sanskrit as *samādhi-bala* (power of concentration); one of the five powers (S. *pañcha-bala*) to be developed on the path to enlightenment, first enumerated in the Buddhist Pali *suttas*.<sup>1</sup>

*Jōriki* is the first of three ways in which *zazen* (sitting meditation) is developed, the others being *kenshō* or *satori* (awakening, either initial or ultimate) and *mujōdō no taigen* (bringing that experience into everyday life). *Jōriki* leads on to *kenshō* or *satori*, which is an increasing realization of one's own true nature and the nature of the world of transient phenomena. Once developed, *jōriki* is manifested outwardly as mastery over one's passions and emotions, with full control of one's actions and reactions; one is no longer a slave to circumstances and the environment. The American *Zen* Buddhist teacher Philip Kapleau (1912–2004) explains:

*Jōriki*, the first of these, is the power or strength which arises when the mind has been unified and brought to one-pointedness through concentration. This is more than the ability to concentrate in the usual sense of the word. It is a dynamic power which, once mobilized, enables us even in the most sudden and unexpected situations to act instantly, without pausing to collect our wits, and in a manner wholly appropriate to the circumstances. One who has developed *jōriki* is no longer a slave to his passions, neither is he at the mercy of his environment. Always in command of both himself and the circumstances of his life, he is able to move with perfect freedom and equanimity. The cultivation of certain supranormal powers is also made possible by *jōriki*, as is the state in which the mind becomes like perfectly still water. . . .

Although the power of *jōriki* can be endlessly enlarged through regular practice, it will recede and eventually vanish if we neglect *zazen*. And while it is true that many extraordinary powers flow from *jōriki*, nevertheless through it alone we cannot cut the roots of our illusory view of the world. Mere strength of concentration is not enough for the highest types of *Zen*; concomitantly there must be *satori*-awakening. . . .

The practice of Buddhist *Zen* should embrace all three of these objectives (*jōriki*, *kenshō*, *mujōdō no taigen*), for they are interrelated. There is, for instance, an essential connection between *jōriki* and *kenshō*. *Kenshō* is 'the wisdom naturally associated with *jōriki*', which is the power arising from concentration. *Jōriki* is connected with *kenshō* in yet another way. Many people may never be able to reach

*kenshō* unless they have first cultivated a certain amount of *jōriki*, for otherwise they may find themselves too restless, too nervous and uneasy to persevere with their *zazen*. Moreover, unless fortified by *jōriki*, a single experience of *kenshō* will have no appreciable effect on your life, and will fade away into a mere memory. For although through the experience of *kenshō* you have apprehended the underlying unity of the cosmos with your mind's eye, without *jōriki* you are unable to act with the total force of your being on what your inner vision has revealed to you.

*Hakuun Ryōko Yasutani, in Three Pillars of Zen, TPZK pp.46–48*

See also: **kenshō**, **pañca-bala** (►4), **satori**.

1. *E.g. Saṃyutta Nikāya* 50:1, *Bala Saṃyutta*, *PTSS5* p.249; *Anguttara Nikāya* 5:14, *PTSA3* pp.10–11.

**jōshin** (J) *Lit.* concentrated (*jō*) mind (*shin*); collected or meditative mind; the converse of *sanshin* (distracted mind); a state of unified consciousness in which the mind is fully absorbed within itself in alert awareness.

**joy** (Gk. *chara*, *eudaimonia*, *euphrosynē*) Spiritually, the ecstatic bliss of contact with the Divine; the peace and happiness of heaven, often as the 'joys of heaven'. Though commonly engendered by spiritual practice or prayer, such joy is generally regarded as the grace of God, since it appears spontaneously, and cannot normally be experienced at will.

In the majority of religions, joy is regarded as the possession of the virtuous in the afterlife. Hence, Socratēs, speaking of his impending death, says to one of his companions, "I shall leave you and go to the joys of the blessed (*makarōn eudaimonia*)."<sup>1</sup> The implication is that the essence of true joy is spiritual, enjoyed by the soul when freed from the body. As Philo Judaeus says, "Joy (*chara*) that is free from all sham and counterfeit is found only in the good things of the soul," not in the "accidents of our position – either bodily health or a profusion of external advantages".<sup>2</sup> In fact:

Soaring above the whole world of bodily forms, and exulting in the joy (*chara*) that is in God, she (the soul) will count as a matter for laughter those anxious cares of men which are expended on human affairs, whether in war or peace.

*Philo Judaeus, On Drunkenness 14, PCW3 pp.348–49*

A soul possessed by joy is untouched by the world:

He is free from all depression and melancholy; his days are passed in happy freedom from fear and sorrow; the sufferings and hardships of life never touch him even in his dreams, because every part of his soul is wholly occupied by joy (*chara*).

*Philo Judaeus, On Rewards and Punishments 5; cf. PCW8 pp.332–33, WPJ3 p.464*

Such “joy,” he adds, “is peculiar to the wise man”, making him of cheerful and humorous disposition:

The countenance of wisdom is not scowling and severe, contracted by deep thought and depression of spirit, but on the contrary cheerful and tranquil, full of joy (*chara*) and gladness, feelings which often prompt a man to be sportive and jocular in a perfectly refined way. Such sportiveness is in harmony with a dignified self-respect, a harmony like that of a lyre tuned to give forth a single melody by a blending of answering notes.

*Philo Judaeus, On Planting 40, PCW3 pp.298–301*

Laughter is the outward and bodily sign of that unseen joy (*chara*) that is in the mind. And joy (*chara*) is the most excellent and noblest of the higher emotions. By it, the soul is filled through and through with cheerfulness, rejoicing in the Father and Creator of all.

*Philo Judaeus, On Rewards and Punishments 5; cf. PCW8 pp.330–31, WPJ3 p.463*

Joy, he also says, is the result of a pure heart: “Truly beautiful is that insatiable joy (*euphrosynē*) which the perfect virtues give.”<sup>3</sup> It expands the consciousness: “Joy (*chara*), . . . when it has fallen upon the soul unexpectedly, makes it larger than it was before.”<sup>4</sup> But the true source of joy is God, whose “Cupbearer” is the divine Word or “*Logos*”:

Who is it that pours forth the sacred measures of true joy (*euphrosynē*) but the *Logos*, the Cupbearer, . . . whose medicine gives joy and happiness.

*Philo Judaeus, On Dreams II:37; cf. PCW5 pp.554–55, TGH1 pp.245–46*

Joy is a subject to which practically all mystics have repeatedly returned in their writings. Richard Rolle writes of “growth in spiritual joy”<sup>5</sup> and an “abundance of . . . inner joy”,<sup>6</sup> describing it as “great and loving”,<sup>7</sup> “unspeakable”,<sup>8</sup> “inexpressible”,<sup>9</sup> “indescribable”,<sup>10</sup> “sweetest”,<sup>11</sup> “loveliest”,<sup>12</sup> “immense”,<sup>13</sup> “heavenly”,<sup>14</sup> “eternal”,<sup>15</sup> and so on. He adds that “the more a man loves God, the more he will find abundant joy in himself.”<sup>16</sup> Richard of St Victor likewise speaks at length of the “joy of inward sweetness”,<sup>17</sup> while Walter Hilton writes of tasting the “sweetness of supernatural joy”.<sup>18</sup> They all, together with

Margery Kempe, Julian of Norwich, Thomas à Kempis and practically every other mystic, have recourse to very similar superlatives in their descriptions of this inner, spiritual, and heavenly joy. “That joy,” says the author of the *Cloud of Unknowing*, “is such that it takes from a man all awareness and feeling of his own being”<sup>19</sup> – it lifts him out of the consciousness of his individual self.

Such joy is the fruit of interior prayer and inner purity, and is experienced most deeply by those who are least attached to the body and to material things:

In those who live in true purity, there is a fountain of joy and ecstasy. It sanctions no sadness, since the eternal Word, in which all the angels and saints enjoy ecstasy, speaks in them as in the saints in heaven. That their joy is not as perfect as those in heaven is only because they still have their body with them. Were they free from their body, they would have the same ecstasy as those in heaven. Nevertheless, their joy is unutterably great, and the more they are empty of earthly things, the greater their joy.

If, then, earthly things even obstruct devout men from their joys, how can they who are immersed in them possibly experience joy? They imagine they are in a good state, but this condition is quite contrary to the real one, for just as it is never quite well with a soul as long as it is in the body, so also there is woe to those who are greatly weighed down with earthly things. They, however, who most put aside earthly things have the real joy which issues forth from a living, pure ground, and the Holy Spirit is the source from which this joy flows. Hence, St Paul says: “The fruit of the Holy Spirit is peace, joy, and justice.”<sup>20</sup>

*Book of the Poor in Spirit 2:2.1, BPSG p.133*

Joy, says St Teresa, is the result of the “sweet love of our God”, which fills the soul with a sweet intoxication:

It enters the soul with great sweetness, and brings it such joy and satisfaction that it cannot understand how or in what way this blessing is entering it. So anxious is it not to lose this love that it desires to remain still without moving, and neither speak nor even look anywhere lest it should vanish. . . . When experiencing this joy, it is so deeply inebriated and absorbed that it seems to be beside itself and in a kind of divine intoxication, knowing not what it is desiring or saying or asking for. In fact, it is unconscious of itself, yet not so much so that it cannot understand something of what is passing.

*Teresa of Ávila, On the Song of Songs 4; cf. CWT2 p.384*

Brother Lawrence, who made it a conscious habit to remain in continual awareness of the presence of God, speaks of the

habitual, silent and secret conversation of the soul with God, which often causes in me joys and raptures inwardly, and sometimes also outwardly, so great that I am forced to use means to moderate them, and prevent their appearance to others.

*Brother Lawrence, Practice of the Presence of God, Letters 2, PPGL p.31*

And likewise:

I am always happy: all the world suffers; and I, who deserve the severest discipline, feel joys so continual, and so great, that I can scarce contain them.

*Brother Lawrence, Practice of the Presence of God, Letters 12, PPGL p.54*

Writing in the second half of the twentieth century, Californian mystic Nancy Mayorga similarly describes a joy that bring tears to her eyes:

I have days when, without exaggeration, I go around slightly inebriated with life. I have moments of being swept by a joy that brings tears to my eyes.

*Nancy Mayorga, Hunger of the Soul, HSDM p.5*

Or as the poet Frederick William Orde Ward (1843–1922), puts it:

all my soul was bathed with trembling joy  
and lost in dreadful bliss,  
as at God's very kiss.

*Frederick William Orde Ward, The Beatific Vision, in OEMV (189) p.344*

Though eternal joy in the Lord is promised to the faithful throughout the Bible and associated literature, it is often difficult to distinguish between the promise of traditional religious expectations and the description of an author's own experience. Some of the most poignant and most convincing passages appear in the *Psalms*. In one, the writer begs, "Give me unbounded joy (*simḥah*) in Your presence."<sup>21</sup> In another, he says:

*Yahweh*, you have given more joy (*simḥah*) to my heart  
than others ever knew,  
for all their corn and wine.

*Psalms 4:7, JB*

And similarly, where sackcloth is a symbol of grief and mourning, and perhaps, too, of the body:

You have turned my mourning into dancing;  
 You have stripped off my sackcloth,  
     and clothed me with joy (*simḥah*);  
 Now my heart will sing to You unceasingly;  
*Yahweh*, my God, I shall praise You forever.

*Psalms 30:11–12, NJB*

Likewise, the prophet Isaiah proclaims:

I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful (*gheel gool*)  
 in my God.

*Isaiah 61:10, KJV*

Jesus ben Sirach similarly maintains that he who relies upon Wisdom, the creative power,

will find happiness and a crown of joy;  
 He will inherit an everlasting name.

*Wisdom of Jesus ben Sirach 15:6, NJB*

In the New Testament, the faithful servant (disciple) of Jesus' parable is rewarded with the promise, "Enter then into the joy of your Lord."<sup>22</sup> In *John*, Jesus instructs his disciples to dwell in his love, so that they might remain full of joy:

If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in His love. I have told you these things so that my joy (*chara*) might remain in you, and so that your joy (*chara*) might be full.

*John 15:10–11; cf. KJV*

And he promises them that although they will be unhappy when he leaves them, when he comes again in his spiritual form, within them, then they will possess a happiness that no one can take away:

Now, therefore, you are sorrowful; but when I see you again, then your heart will rejoice, with a joy (*chara*) that no one can take away from you.

*John 16:22; cf. KJV*

The same theme of joy is found again among the very early Christian writings. The writer of the *Odes of Solomon*, for instance, exhorts his readers to open themselves to the divine influence of joy:



Open, open your hearts to the delightful joy of the Lord,  
and let your love overflow from the heart to the lips,  
to bring forth fruits to the Lord, living and holy,  
and to walk with watchfulness in His light.

*Odes of Solomon 8:1–2, OSD p.38*

And again:

Walk in the Knowledge of the Most High,  
and you will know the generosity of the Lord's grace,  
His joy, and the fullness of knowledge of Him.

*Odes of Solomon 23:4, OSD p.100*

Joy is also commonly mentioned in gnostic writings, where the “great”,<sup>23</sup> “ineffable”<sup>24</sup> and “unending joy”<sup>25</sup> of those who rest in God is a recurrent theme. In Manichaean texts, the bestower of divine joy is regarded as the saviour or master. One hymn describes Mānī himself as the “Messenger of joy”,<sup>26</sup> while another maintains that “he brings joy and happiness to those who suffer.”<sup>27</sup> Likewise, a Coptic psalmist addresses Mānī:

Lo, joy has overtaken me  
through your Right Hand that came to me.

*Manichaean Psalm Book; cf. MPB p.153*

Here, the “Right Hand” is the divine creative power. In another psalm, the saviour is addressed as a personification of the divine *Nous* (creative intelligence):

Wash us now therefore in the dewdrops of your joy...  
Open to us the vaults of the heavens  
and walk before us to the joy of your kingdom,  
O glorious One!

*Manichaean Psalm Book CCXL; cf. MPB p.41*

The devotees themselves also write ecstatically of their inner bliss. “Filled with joy on seeing you are we, loving Lord!”<sup>28</sup> says one, addressing “Jesus the Splendour”, an epithet of the inner, radiant, spiritual Jesus. Another assures his reader, “I have found a joy wherein is no suffering.”<sup>29</sup>

The saviour also restores the soul to the joy of its primal estate, before it fell from its original home:

Grant me the joy I once had in my original realm:  
remove all anxieties and afflictions of past *kalpas* (ages).

Perfect my nature of light (C. *míng xìng*),  
wonderfully and exquisitely adorned:  
As I was in the beginning,  
before descending into this land of greed and desire.  
*Mónjiào xiàbù zàn, T54 2140:1271b9–10; cf. LSMH (40) p.179*

The inner heavens are also described as the “habitations of joy”, seen with the “joyous eye of my soul”.<sup>30</sup> They are “full of joy” and resound with joyful “melodies”:

Entirely full of joy are the divine habitations,  
the noble ships, the ferries of the Word. . . .  
The chariots of light are the gate to the kingdom,  
joyful are the melodies sounding from them.  
*Manichaean Hymns, MM3 p.883, RMP bl; cf. GSR p.57, ML p.140*

See also: **bliss, sweetness.**

1. Plato, *Phaedo* 115d, *DPI* p.475.
2. Philo Judaeus, *Worse Attacks the Better* 37; cf. *PCW2* pp.292–93.
3. Philo Judaeus, *On the Unchangeableness of God* 33, *PCW3* pp.88–89.
4. Philo Judaeus, *On the Migration of Abraham* 28, *PCW4* pp.222–23.
5. Richard Rolle, *Fire of Love* 15, *FLRR* p.92.
6. Richard Rolle, *Fire of Love* 32, *FLRR* p.146.
7. Richard Rolle, *Fire of Love* 28, *FLRR* p.130.
8. Richard Rolle, *Fire of Love* 22, 31, *FLRR* pp.114, 143.
9. Richard Rolle, *Fire of Love* 34, *FLRR* p.151.
10. Richard Rolle, *Fire of Love* 41, *FLRR* p.186.
11. Richard Rolle, *Fire of Love* 33, *FLRR* p.148.
12. Richard Rolle, *Fire of Love* 37, *FLRR* p.168.
13. Richard Rolle, *Fire of Love* 41, *FLRR* p.186.
14. Richard Rolle, *Fire of Love* 38, *FLRR* p.172.
15. Richard Rolle, *Fire of Love* 28, *FLRR* p.133, *passim*.
16. Richard Rolle, *Fire of Love* 23, *FLRR* p.115.
17. Richard of St Victor, *Benjamin* 7–8, *CSK* pp.19–22.
18. Walter Hilton, *Ladder of Perfection* 1:44, *LPH* p.52.
19. *Cloud of Unknowing* 44; cf. *CU* p.92, *CUCW* p.112, *CUEU* p.181.
20. *Romans* 14:17; cf. *Galatians* 5:22.
21. *Psalms* 16:11, *JB*.
22. *Matthew* 25:21; cf. *KJV*.
23. E.g. *Pistis Sophia*, *PS*, *PSGG*, *passim*.
24. E.g. *Eugnostos the Blessed*, *NHS27*, *passim*.
25. E.g. *Origin of the World* 125, *NHS21* pp.86–87.

26. *Manichaeae Text*, Pelliot M914.2, in *HMV* p.306, *GSR* p.84, *ML* p.11.
27. *Mónjìào xiàbù zàn*, T54 2140:1278c8; cf. *LSMH* (370) p.211.
28. *Manichaeae Hymns*, MM2 p.312ff., *RMP* bt; cf. in *GSR* p.66, *MM* p.87, *ML* p.108.
29. *Manichaeae Psalm Book*; cf. *MPB* p.168.
30. *Manichaeae Psalm Book* CCLXXX, *MPB* p.101.

**kaivalya** (S) *Lit.* perfect isolation, aloneness, aloofness; absolute unity; complete detachment, non-attachment; utter transcendence; freedom of the soul from matter or further transmigrations; liberation or emancipation of the soul from the wheel of birth and death; absolute union with the Divine, in which all attachments, desires, and the sense of individual identity have been discarded; final beatitude. The state of *kaivalya* is sometimes called *kaivalya-amukti* (liberation of absolute union), which is regarded as synonymous with *jīvanmukti* (liberation while still living in the body). Longing for *kaivalya* is the underlying cause of all discontent. The soul finds no peace until it finds its divine inner Source.

Liberation from the wheel of birth and death is the highest aspiration and final goal of all Hindu, Buddhist and Jain religious paths, and all forms of *yoga*. As the *Kaivalya Upanishad* says in its final verse, speaking of the yogic path:

By this, one attains the wisdom (*jñāna*) that destroys the ocean of transmigration (*saṃsāra*). Therefore, by knowing this, one attains the fruits of liberation (*kaivalya*); indeed, one attains liberation (*kaivalya*) itself.

*Kaivalya Upanishad* 25; cf. *MUM* pp.81–82, *PU* pp.931–32

In the *Yoga Sūtras*, Patañjali likewise depicts *kaivalya* as the goal of *yoga*, attained when the veil of spiritual ignorance is removed, and the soul realizes its own innate purity:

On removal of ignorance and its consequences, the soul (*purusha*) attains liberation (*kaivalya*).

*Patañjali, Yoga Sūtras* 2:25

There is liberation (*kaivalya*) when the soul (*purusha*) and the Truth (*Sattva*) are of equal purity.

*Patañjali, Yoga Sūtras* 3:56

In the fourth and final part of the *Yoga Sūtras* – the *Kaivalya-pāda* (‘Liberation part’) – Patañjali describes some of the benefits of liberation. Here,

“discrimination” implies something more than normal human acumen; it refers to the ability to see beyond the illusion of this world:

To a person of discrimination, the soul (*ātman*) ceases to dwell in existence (this world). Then, truly, does the mind become inclined towards discrimination, and gravitates towards liberation (*kaivalya*).

*Patañjali, Yoga Sūtras 4:25–26*

Some final verses of the *Yoga Sūtras*, which are probably an addition made to the original text by a later writer, restate the oft-repeated truth:

There is no difference between *kaivalya* and *nirvāṇa*. Liberation (*kaivalya*) is a state of the essence of the absolute Being (*Purusha*). In liberation (*kaivalya*), the soul (*purusha*) sees itself in the entire universe, and sees the entire universe in the soul (*purusha*).

*Patañjali, Yoga Sūtras 4:35–37*

The ninth-century Indian philosopher, Shankara, also refers to the final liberation and realization of the soul as *kaivalya*:

Now I am going to tell you of the real nature of the supreme Self, realizing which a man is freed from bondage and attains liberation (*kaivalya*)...

Through heedlessness a man deviates from his own real nature, and the man who has thus deviated falls. The fallen man comes to ruin, and is scarcely seen to rise again.

Therefore, one should give up thinking about the objects of sense, for that is the root of all mischief. Only he who attains liberation (*kaivalya*) while living is liberated (*kevala*) after the dissolution of the body...

Realizing the liberation (*kaivalya*) of being free from the body, and becoming eternally identified with *Brahman*, the sage no longer suffers transmigration.

*Shankara, Vivekachūḍāmaṇi 124, 328–29, 567; cf. VCSM pp.45–46, 124, 210–11*

Speaking of the state of *unmanī*, of consciousness devoid of mind, the *Haṭha Yoga Pradīpikā* similarly says:

Everything in this world, animate and inanimate, is the fabrication of the mind. When the mind attains *unmanī*, duality (*dvaita*) vanishes.

By detachment from all objects of knowledge, the mind is dissolved. When the mind is dissolved, then only absolute union (*kaivalya*) remains.

*Haṭha Yoga Pradīpikā 4:60–61; cf. HYP p.55, HYPM (61–62) p.553*

*Kaivalya* is also the spiritual goal of Jainism. It is the enlightenment of the *Tīrthankaras* or *arhats*, the illumined ones. What stands between this omniscient state and ordinary mortals is the veil of *karma*. But when all the karmic veils are cleared away, then the soul is said to attain the stage of *kevala-jñāna* (knowledge of oneness) or *kaivalya*. The soul then shines in its own light, experiencing an indescribable peace and bliss. This is the supreme ideal and purpose in life.

See also: **kevala-jñāna**, **kevalin** (7.1), **moksha**, **mukti**, **nirvāṇa**.

**kakusoku** (J) *Lit.* wake up (*kaku*) and touch (*soku*); awake and touch true Reality; be wide awake and live in Reality; wake up and have intimate contact with Reality; awake and transcend duality and see things for what they really are; to awaken from distraction and mental unawareness; a term relating to the state of mind during seated meditation (*zazen*); a *Sōtō Zen* term used by *Zen* master Keizan Jōkin (1268–1325), also known as Taishō (great patriarch), one of the two ancestors of the *Sōtō* school and a fourth generation *Dharma* heir of Dōgen (1200–1253), founder of the *Sōtō* lineage in Japan. *Kakusoku* sometimes refers to enlightenment, sometimes to awakening or awareness at a lower level.

**kandire** (AC) A state of spiritual development beyond spiritual perfection (*agüyjé*), according to the Avá-Chiripá group of the South American Guaraní. The anthropologist Miguel Bartolomé explains:

Lightness of body and soul is the essential factor in reaching the state of *agüyjé* (spiritual perfection), after which comes the even more inaccessible state of *kandire*. When a man is or is becoming *kandire*, flames spring from his chest as evidence that his heart is illuminated by divine wisdom (*tatá-chiná*). Only then can a man reach the land without evil (*ywy mará ey*) by flying over the great primeval sea.<sup>1</sup>

Miguel Bartolomé, “Shamanism Among the Avá-Chiripá,” SAC p.117

See also: **agüyjé**.

1. León Cádogan, “La encarnación y la concepción,” *ECMR* p.242.

**kashf** (A/P) *Lit.* unveiling (as in the lifting of a curtain or veil); thus, discovery, revelation, an unveiling that reveals knowledge that is certain and self-evident, requiring no proof; mystical illumination of the unseen spiritual realities that

lie beyond the veil of material perceptions; visionary revelation; the direct vision or perception of inner realities; gnosis; one of a number of terms used by Sufis for gnosis, the mystical knowledge that comes from inner experience, including *baṣīrah* (insight), *dhawq* (tasting), *fath* or *futūḥ* (opening, revelation), *shuhūd* (contemplation), and *mushāhadah* (witnessing).

Mystical revelation is also called *kashf ilāhī* (divine revelation), which is different from *kashf kawnī* (revelation of the created, the dreams and clairvoyance of those who practise self-purification), *kashf ‘aqlī* (revelation by reason, as in philosophy), and *kashf imānī* (revelation by faith, by which one “talks with angels” and “meets the spirits of the prophets” as a result of perfect faith).<sup>1</sup>

Ibn al-‘Arabī says that real or “sound knowledge” does not arise by thought or reason, but only as the divine gift of “unveiling (*kashf*)”:

Sound knowledge (*‘ilm*) is not given by reflection, nor by what the rational thinkers establish by means of their reflective powers. Sound knowledge is only that which God throws into the heart of the knower. It is a divine light for which God singles out any of His servants whom He will, whether angel, messenger, prophet, friend, or person of faith. He who has no unveiling (*kashf*) has no knowledge.

*Ibn al-‘Arabī, Meccan Revelations 1:218.19, FMIA1 (1:35) p.331, SPK p.170*

*Kashf* also reveals knowledge concerning the material world:

Al-‘Ārif (the gnostic, al-Ḥallāj) said: “Unveiling (*kashf*) of the All-hearing brings about knowledge of God’s encompassment of all the particles of phenomenal existence.”

*Rūzbihān, Mashrab al-Arwāḥ 16:4, MARB p.268; cf. in SSE12 p.164*

Sufi systematizers have described various stages of mystic revelation, as the soul of the wayfarer ascends to the divine Essence. Among these, there are several degrees of *kashf*:

For the wayfarers, unveiling (*kashf*) means revelation (*al-mukāshafah*), which is the lifting of the veils for the spirit, which cannot be perceived by the outward senses.

It has been said that when the wayfarer moves from the basest material nature to the loftiest heights of Reality through the attraction of devotion (*irādat*), he purifies his inner being through spiritual discipline (*riyāzat*). The more his eye becomes opened, the more veils become removed and the purification of understanding of spiritual realities is increased; this is called visual unveiling (*kashf-i naẓarī*). The wayfarer must pass beyond this, advancing farther along and

leaving the way of the philosophers and sages behind. He must work more with the heart, in order to become linked with the light of the heart; this is known as luminal unveiling (*kashf-i nūrī*).

However the wayfarer must still press on for revelations of the inner consciousness (*mukāshafāt-i sirrī*) to appear; this is termed divine unveiling (*kashf-i ilāhī*). Here the mysteries of His creation and the wisdom of Being are made manifest. Yet the wayfarer must pass beyond this as well, so that spiritual revelation (*mukāshafah-i rūḥānī*) may appear. Paradise, hell, angels and infinite realms become revealed. However this too must be left behind, for revelations of the arcane (*mukāshafāt-i khafī*) to be made manifest, whereby one may find the way to the realm of God's Attributes; this is called Attributive unveiling (*mukāshafah-i ṣifātī*).

In this station, if revelation comes through the Attribute of knowledge, it takes the form of divinely infused knowledge (*ilm min ladunnī*), as was the case with Moses. If it is through the Attribute of sight, vision (*ru'yat*) and witnessing (*mushāhadat*) occur. If it is through the Attribute of majesty, true subsistence takes place. If it is through the Attribute of singularity (*waḥdānīyat*), Unity (*Waḥdat*) appears. The same applies for the rest of the Attributes. As for unveiling of the Essence (*kashf-i ḥātī*), it is of such a high level that it defies description.

*Tahānawī, Kashshāf Iṣṭilāḥāt al-Funūn, KIFT4 pp19–20; cf. in SSE7 pp.34–35*

Other Sufis have described *kashf* more simply and poetically:

What is unveiling (*kashf*)? –  
To leap from the earth of existence  
into the blood of Nonexistence:  
To leap from behind the veil.

*Attār, Muṣībat-Nāmāh, MNFA p.45; cf. in SSE7 p.33*

At the station of Being and unveiling (*kashf*),  
there is no question of why or how or wherefore.

*Sanā'ī, Dīvān 52, AMM p.98; cf. in SSE7 p.33*

The term also commonly appears in the titles of Sufi books, such as *Kashf al-Maḥjūb* (*Unveiling of the Veiled*), where it may also be roughly translated as 'Light on ...'.

See also: **dhawq**, **fath**, **mushāhadah**, **shuhūd**.

1. See Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, MDI pp.192–93, 205.

**katnut de moḥin, moḥin de katnut** (He) *Lit.* smallness (*katnut*) of (*de*) mind (*moḥin*); spiritual contraction. See **gadlut de moḥin**.

**katsu** (J) *Lit.* to win, to attain mastery; an expletive uttered by Zen Buddhist monks to express an enlightening experience such as a *satori* (comprehension) or *kenshō* (seeing one's nature), or sudden insight into a *kōan* (a riddle with no logical solution). This *katsu* is different from the *katsu* (to shout) that forms part of the stick and shout (J. *bōkatsu*, C. *bàng hè*) method used by *Chán* and *Zen* masters to shock a student out of a conventional, analytical way of thinking and view of the world, into a greater spiritual awareness.<sup>1</sup>

See also: **bōkatsu** (8.5).

1. See “katsu,” *Oxford Dictionary of Buddhism, ODB*.

**kenshō** (J), **jiànxìng** (C) *Lit.* seeing (*ken*, *jiàn*) one's nature (*shō*, *xìng*); perceiving one's essential nature, seeing one's own true nature; *Zen* and *Chán* Buddhist terms for enlightenment or awakening, either as a moment of deep insight or as the experience of ultimate enlightenment; seeing one's essential *buddha*-nature; seeing or realizing one's true self as one with the underlying Reality of all things; seeing one's illusory self to be like all other phenomena, *i.e.* impermanent (*anicca*), the source of suffering (*dukkha*), and lacking in any permanent identity (*anattā*), everything being made of constituents that are dependent on each other and do not exist as distinct and independent entities.

The two terms also appear in expressions such as *jiànxìng wùdào*, which means seeing one's essential nature and awakening to the Way (*Dào*), and *kenshō jōbutsu* (J) or *jiànxìng chéngfó* (C), which mean seeing one's essential nature and becoming a *buddha*. The latter is used to translate the Sanskrit *drishṭi-svabhāva* (seeing one's essential nature). As a term for full enlightenment, *kenshō* is used synonymously with *bodhi* (S. awakening), *satori* (J. understanding), and *wù* (C. realization).

The American Zen Buddhist teacher Philip Kapleau (1912–2004) explains the meaning of *kenshō*. He is speaking here of contemplation on the well-known *mu kōan* (the ‘no’ *kōan*),<sup>1</sup> which is intended to open up the world of direct experience and realization as compared to intellectual or theoretical knowledge:

*Kenshō* is the direct awareness that you are more than this puny body or limited mind. Stated negatively, it is the realization that the universe is not external to you. Positively, it is experiencing the universe as yourself. So long as you consciously or unconsciously think in terms of a distinction between yourself and others, you are caught in the



dualism of ‘I’ and ‘not I’. This I is not indigenous to our true nature, being merely an illusion produced by the six senses. But because this illusory ego-I has been treated as a real entity throughout this existence and previous ones, it has come to occupy the deepest level of the subconscious mind. Your single-hearted concentration on *mu* will gradually dispel this I-concept from your consciousness. With its complete banishment you suddenly experience Oneness. This is *kenshō*.

*Philip Kapleau, Three Pillars of Zen, TPZK p.137*

The Western scholar, Peter Harvey adds:

It (*kenshō*) is a blissful realization where a person’s inner nature, the originally pure mind, is directly known in a sudden reordering of his or her perception of the world. All appears vividly; each thing retaining its individuality, yet empty of separateness, so being unified with all else, including the meditator. There is just an indescribable thusness, beyond the duality of subject and object; a thusness which is dynamic and immanent in the world. This vision of unity was hinted at by the Chinese monk Sēngzhào (384–414): “Heaven and earth and I are of the same root. The ten thousand things and I are of one substance.”<sup>2</sup> When a *kenshō* passes, the meditator finds the conventional world is as it was, and yet somehow different: “Mountains are once again mountains.”

*Peter Harvey, An Introduction to Buddhism, IBTS pp.369–70*

The modern *Zen* commentator Katsuki Sekida summarizes the fruit of *kenshō*:

When one experiences *kenshō*, one understands the way of the universe, the *Dharma*, and all.

*Katsuki Sekida, on Mumonkan, Case 19, TZC p.73*

*Kenshō* can refer to any experience from an initial realization concerning the nature of oneself, one’s mind, one’s consciousness and the world, to complete understanding of Reality. According to a *kōan* story related in the *Mumonkan*, the monk Myō went to see the sixth patriarch, seeking instruction:

The patriarch said, “Think neither good nor evil. At this very moment, what is the original self of the monk Myō?”

At these words, Myō was directly illuminated. His whole body was covered with sweat. “Besides the secret words and the secret meaning, you have just now revealed to me, is there anything else, deeper still?”

The patriarch said, “What I have told you is no secret at all. When you look into your own true self, whatever is deeper is found right there.”

*Mumonkan, Case 23, TZC pp.81–82*

Commenting on this *kōan*, Katsuki Sekida observes that there is always deeper to go:

When one experiences *kenshō*, one generally thinks one has seen into the whole secret of *Zen*. But the more you proceed, the deeper the world of *Zen* becomes. Myō felt the truth of this, which reveals his sincere character. The deeper you go into your *samādhi*, the more profound you will find it becomes.

*Katsuki Sekida, on Mumonkan, Case 23, TZC p.84*

Sudden awakenings, realizations or epiphanies are a natural feature of human spiritual development, generally arising from persistent spiritual practice, from a yearning for spiritual understanding, or from contact with a spiritually advanced person. They are stepping stones on the path to full enlightenment. Even the *Rinzai* school of *Zen* Buddhism, while seeking sudden *kenshōs* through the use of paradoxical *kōans* and allied methods, together with *zazen* (sitting meditation), also points out that these illuminations are not places to linger. Complacency and the feeling that one has ‘arrived’ strike at the roots of on-going spiritual evolution. *Sōtō*, the other surviving school of *Zen* Buddhism, emphasizes the gradual approach, through the practice of *shikantaza* (just sitting). In *Sōtō Zen*, *kenshōs* are understood as a natural aspect of the spiritual unfolding that leads to the supreme *kenshō*.

In the *Chán* tradition, according to masters such as Guīfēng Zōngmì (780–841) of the *Hézhé* school, an initial insight (*jiànxìng*) into one’s real *buddha*-nature – that one is already enlightened, lacking only realization of it – provides the impetus for gradual deepening of the understanding, culminating in complete enlightenment. The term used in this context is *dùnwù jiànxīu* (sudden awakening and gradual cultivation).

See also: **bodhi**, **epiphany**, **satori**.

1. *Mumonkan*, Case 1.
2. Jō Hōshi, in *Zen Training*, *ZTMP* pp.173–74.

**kete wānanga** (Mo) *Lit.* basket (*kete*) of knowledge (*wānanga*); the three sacred baskets of knowledge obtained by the god *Tāne* from *Io-Matua-Kore* (*Io* the Parentless), the supreme Being, and brought back for mankind.

This myth, well known among the Māori, is retold by the contemporary writer Samuel Timoti Robinson of the Kāi Tahu, the principal tribe of New Zealand’s South Island. According to the story, only the god *Tāne* had sufficient *mana* (spiritual power) to ascend the twelve heavens. After fasting and repeating *karakia* (incantations) to cleanse and render himself pure of heart,

he climbed up into the dark realm of *Te Pō* ('the Night', 'the Darkness', 'the Void') that hangs above the heavens. For, "There, beyond, dwelled *Io*; for after the creation of the world and humankind, *Io* retired to the *Pō*."<sup>1</sup>

Having reached the top of the *Pō*, *Tāne* was advised that above the realm of darkness, at Rangi-atea (a temple in the twelfth heaven) on the summit of Mount Maunganui, he would find *Te-Matua-Kore* (the Parentless), the supreme Being:

And *Tāne* found the path that led up to its summit. At its peak, *Tāne* found a massive fortified *pā* (palace) and passed through its front gate. On entering the *ātea-tapu* (sacred clearing), *Tāne* was received into the *pā* by a host of supernatural beings called the *mairekura*. They took him beyond the first series of palisades that lay around the *pā*. On the inner wall they prepared him further to behold the presence of *Io* the Supreme Intelligence. In that ceremony *Tāne* was purified by the *mairekura* and was bathed in the tranquil waters. These he named the waters of *Rongo*, because they grant tranquillity and peace.

The guardians took *Tāne* within the inner palisades of the *pā*, which was named *Matangireira*. Here, the *mairekura* set him before *Io-Matua-Kore*, the Parentless God, inside a great *marae* (gathering place).

*Tāne* found *Io* there and, on beholding the supreme Being in awe, he declared, "*Te ihi* (the essential force), *te wehi*, (the awe, fear), *te wana* (the awe inspiring, exciting), *te mana e* (the spiritual power)!"

Then *Io* asked, "Why have you come?"

"I have come for the *wānanga* (knowledge)."

"Your journey was safe?"

"My elder brother *Whiro-te-tipua* seeks to stop me."

"He cannot come here as the winds of the *Pō* are so fierce that while you remain here none may pass onwards. I know why you have come."

*Io* took *Tāne* outside the *marae* onto the courtyard called *Te Rauroha*, where he was again ceremonially purified by the female beings of the *pā*. *Io* then conducted *Tāne* into Rangi-atea (a temple in the twelfth heaven), the knowledge house, and they entered the house of divine knowledge. The *whatukura* guardians within gave *Tāne* the three baskets of knowledge and two sacred stones:

The first basket was called: *Te Kete Ururu-Matua* ('the Basket of the Inner Parent').

The second basket was called: *Te Kete Ururu-Rangi* ('the Basket of the Inner Abode').

The third basket was called: *Te Kete Ururu-Tau* ('the Basket of Inner Ability').

And *Tāne* learnt that the first and highest basket was full of wisdom and inner peace and love. Then he saw that the second basket

contained the knowledge of incantations, the elements, and ritual, and all genealogy. And he learnt that the third basket contained the knowledge of the earth and ways of living. The guardians gave *Tāne* the two stones that accompanied the baskets and the stones were named *Hukatai* and *Rehutai*.

*Tāne* and his precious gifts were then escorted down through the *Pō* by the *whatukura*. They went across the *Pō* and in the topmost heaven *Tāne* found *Tāwhiri* and his mighty host of winds waiting for him to rejoin the escort. Then the *whatukura* bade them well and they began their journey back down the heavens.

At the fifth heaven, *Tāne* and his companions were again attacked by the hordes of *Whiro*. This time a great mass of demons attacked, and they came in the form of birds, mosquitoes, and flies. However, *Tāne* and his companions were now armed with the *wānanga* and *Tāne* recited a chant from the second basket that at once defeated them. Some of the enemies were captured and *Tāne* brought them down to *Papatūānuku* ('Earth Mother'). They consisted of the fly, the moth, mantis, butterfly and many other kinds of insects, which dwell upon the earth even to this day.

When *Tāne* reached the earth, the sky flashed a brilliant red light all over *Papa*, signalling *Tāne*'s success to the world. The baskets of knowledge were hung on the back wall at the first *whare kura* (learning house, school), and the stones were placed inside the school. Another ceremony then took place to establish the first *whare kura*. This has since been preserved down through generations of *tohunga*, the learned priests of the Māori, who eat from the baskets of knowledge. Humankind has since had much knowledge because of *Tāne-i-te-wānanga*.

*Samuel Timoti Robinson, Tohunga, TRAK p.69*

*Tohunga* (priestly adepts) education, and indeed traditional socio-religious Māori life, was based on the guidance and information contained in these sacred baskets (*kete*) of knowledge. Through all subsequent generations this knowledge was meticulously preserved and scrupulously maintained to the highest possible degree of accuracy by initiated *tohunga*. Through the generations it has been continually passed on through the oral tradition as guidance for mankind. Samuel Timoti Robinson goes on to describe the content of the three baskets:

1. *Te Kete Ururu-Tau*. The lowest basket is called 'the basket of the inner ability'. Within its kit is contained all knowledge of arts and crafts, cultivation, gardening, carving, singing, the knowledge of tools for such things as fishing, cooking, and weaving. It also

contains the knowledge of proverbs, teaching, raising children, family values, canoe building, flying kites, hunting, and all things pertaining to daily living in the world of humankind. In the teachings of a *tohunga*, an *akoako* (student) is educated in the finer parts of its knowledge, such as cutting greenstone and carving. Therefore the *whare pūrākau* (school of ancient lore), the *whare mata* (school of chants) and the *whare kura* (learning house, school) have their knowledge in *Te Kete Ururu-Tau*. The knowledge of the basket of the inner ability is understood in the *ata* (shadow) part of people and expressed in the work of the *kiko*, or body.

2. *Te Kete Ururu-Rangi*. The basket of the inner heaven contains mental knowledge as compared to the physical workings of the lowest basket. Here the *tohunga* eats of the fish that grant the knowledge of mythology, magic, rituals, witchcraft, sorcery, and all spiritual ceremonies such as rituals for baptism, prayers, ritual chants, chiefly protocol, wise proverbs, and knowledge of the many gods and all the heavens. When a *tohunga* graduates and has fulfilled the requirements of the house of learning he is allowed to stand upon the stones of *Hukatai* and *Rehutai*, demonstrating that he is now upheld by the knowledge of a master *tohunga*. Therefore the *whare mauri*, and its five grades, has its root in *Te Kete Ururu-Rangi*. This knowledge is understood in the *manawa* (heart) part of people, and such knowledge is expressed in words and ritual.
3. *Te Kete Ururu-Matua*. The basket of the inner parent is most delightful and the highest of the three. This is the realm of enlightenment. One learns that the inner self is the greatest teacher because it is the true self that brings inner peace. All the knowledge of peace, freedom, discernment, understanding, wise philosophy, wise actions and especially the knowledge of *Io* the Most Supreme Being are contained within it. Little is left for the *tohunga* to learn from any teacher after graduation from the *whare mauri*. Here in the highest basket the teacher becomes the inner self. The *tohunga ahurewa* (priest of the high altar) derives knowledge from this basket. Therefore the *whare wānanga* has its knowledge based in *Te Kete Ururu-Matua*. The fish of wisdom and understanding are eaten from it. This knowledge is understood in the *hamano* (highest soul) part of people and expressed in bliss.

*Samuel Timoti Robinson, Tohunga, TRAK pp.91–92*

There are some variations in the legend as told by the different tribes. According to the ethnographer Elsdon Best (1856–1931), for example, whose

primary sources of information came from the Tūhoe tribe (*iwi*) of the eastern North Island, the three baskets or the three divisions of learning “obtained by Tāne from Rangi-atea, the *whare wānanga* of the supreme Being” were:

1. *Te Kete Aronui*. This represents all knowledge pertaining to good – all things humane, beneficent, desirable, peace, peaceful arts, good will, welfare, human sympathy.
2. *Te Kete Tuatea*. This is the basket or repository of evil – the knowledge of all pernicious things; of the art of war, of black magic, of all evil arts, qualities, activities, as pertaining to man, to natural phenomena, to all kingdoms of nature.
3. *Te Kete Tuauri*. This is the basket of ritual – the knowledge of all ritual acts and formulae; of all *tapu* ceremonial as connected with all things on earth and in the twelve heavens; likewise the *mana* of all things performed or desired by man.

*Elsdon Best, Maori School of Learning, MSLB p.11*

See also: **initiation (in Māori tradition)** (7.4), **tohunga** (7.1).

1. Samuel Timoti Robinson, *Tohunga, TRAK* p.68.

**kevala-jñāna** (S), **keval(a)-darshan(a)** (S/H), **keval gyān** (H) *Lit.* absolute (*kevala*) knowledge (*jñāna*); absolute perception (*darshana*); knowledge or perception of the Absolute; perfect, complete, and unlimited knowledge; omniscience; knowledge of all *dravyas* (things or substances), including the soul (*jīva*) in all its many modes of expression; complete knowledge, unlimited by the past, present, or future; infinite knowledge, unobscured by *karma*; the natural knowledge of the soul in its pure and unfettered state; a term especially used in reference to the knowledge or perception of the spiritually enlightened Jain mystics or sages, known as *arhats* or *kevalins*, and particularly for the twenty-four *Tīrthankaras* or *Jinas* who take birth as teachers during the third and fourth epochs of each half cycle of time according to Jain cosmology; one of the five or eight categories of knowledge (*jñāna*) according to Jain philosophers.

One who has attained *kevala-jñāna* is said to possess the fourfold attributes (*ananta-chatuṣṭaya*) of *ananta-darshana* (infinite perception), *ananta-jñāna* (infinite knowledge), *ananta-vīrya* (infinite power), and *ananta-sukha* (infinite bliss).

The soul’s natural omniscience is obscured by the various forms of *ghātiyā* (harming) *karma* and the passions that result from them. Omniscience first requires the attainment of right perception (*samyag-darshana*) of Reality

through the destruction of all *darshana-mohanīya karma* (perception-deluding *karma*), and the elimination of all passions and subsidiary passions through the destruction of all *chāritra-mohanīya karma* (conduct-deluding *karma*). Having attained this state, the upward impetus of the soul automatically destroys the remaining *ghātiyā karma*, which includes obstructing (*antarāya*) *karma* and obscuring (*āvaraṇīya*) *karma*.

The attainment of this stage means that the soul has reached the *sayoga-kevalin guṇasthāna*, the thirteenth of the fourteen stages to enlightenment according to Jain descriptions. Jain philosophy describes nine kinds of *ghātiyā karma* that have been eliminated or destroyed by a soul who has progressed to this stage. Destruction of each of these nine types of *karma* are said to give rise to a corresponding kind of *kevala-labdhī* (omniscience attainment).

Having reached the thirteenth *guṇasthāna*, only *aghātiyā* (harmless) *karma* remains, which keeps the soul bound to the body for as long as the *karma* of the present lifetime is not ended. Full liberation (*moksha*) and the fourteenth *guṇasthāna* is attained only at the end of that lifetime. However, this stage is said to last only momentarily, after which the soul rises to its final abode (*siddhaloka*), above all the heavenly realms, at the very pinnacle of the inhabited universe (*lokākāśha*), where the soul dwells for eternity in the blissful experience of its own infinite consciousness.

*Kevala-jñāna* can only be attained by human beings who are living in this world where *karma* can be created (*karma-bhūmi*), and then only during the third and fourth epochs of each half cycle of time according to Jain cosmology, when *Tīrthankaras* are actively teaching. According to the beliefs of the *Digambara* sect, such omniscience is only attainable by men; women have to take birth as men before they can reach omniscience.

See also: **jñāna**, **kaivalya**, **kevalin** (7.1), **Tīrthakara** (7.1).

**khaṇika samādhi** (Pa) *Lit.* momentary (*khaṇika*) concentration (*samādhi*); in Buddhism, temporary, transient, or changeable concentration; the kind of concentration experienced when a person first begins to practise meditation; sometimes identified with *parikamma samādhi* (preparatory *samādhi*), and sometimes regarded as a stage preceding *parikamma samādhi*.

The Thai *Theravāda* monk and reformist, Ajahn Chah (1918–1992) describes the process of concentration that begins with *khaṇika samādhi*:

A further aspect of mental development that leads to clearer and deeper insight is meditating on an object to calm the mind down. The calm mind is the mind that is firm and stable in *samādhi* (concentration). This can be *khaṇika samādhi* (momentary concentration), *upacāra samādhi* (threshold concentration), or *appanā samādhi* (absorption).

The level of concentration is determined by the refinement of consciousness from moment to moment as you train the mind to maintain awareness on a meditation object.

In *khaṇika samādhi*, the mind unifies for just a short space of time. It calms down in *samādhi*, but having gathered together momentarily, immediately withdraws from that peaceful state. As concentration becomes more refined in the course of meditation, many similar characteristics of the tranquil mind are experienced at each level, so each one is described as a level of *samādhi*, whether it is *khaṇika*, *upacāra*, or *appanā*. At each level, the mind is calm, but the depth of the *samādhi* varies and the nature of the peaceful mental state experienced differs. On one level, the mind is still subject to movement and can wander, but moves around within the confines of the concentrated state. It doesn't get caught into activity that leads to agitation and distraction. Your awareness might follow a wholesome mental object for a while, before returning to settle down at a point of stillness where it remains for a period.

You could compare the experience of *khaṇika samādhi* with a physical activity like taking a walk somewhere: you might walk for a period before stopping for a rest, and having rested start walking again until it's time to stop for another rest. Even though you interrupt the journey periodically to stop walking and take rests, each time remaining completely still, it is only ever a temporary stillness of the body. After a short space of time you have to start moving again to continue the journey. This is what happens within the mind as it experiences such a level of concentration.

*Ajahn Chah, Teachings of Ajahn Chah, TACD pp.452–53*

See also: **parikamma samādhi**, **upacāra samādhi**.

**khāṭir** (A/P) (pl. *khawāṭir*) *Lit.* notion, desire, inclination, liking, propensity, suggestion, memory; soul, heart; favour, pleasure; in Sufism, a passing thought, a sudden thought, an incoming thought; a thought that is quickly displaced by another thought; a thought that one is able to dispel from the mind, as opposed to a *wāqī'ah* (a persistent thought). Rūmī likens the heart to a guest house, the *khawāṭir* being guests, flooding in from the desert, coming and going in incessant motion.<sup>1</sup> The *Khulāṣah-i Sharḥ-i Ta'arruf* suggests that Sufis only apply the term *khawāṭir* to incoming thoughts that come from God, others he calls “temptations” or “carnal desires (*havājis*)”:

Incoming thought (*khāṭir*) signifies something that is common to all people, a fact that cannot be denied, for it is a fundamental occurrence affecting everyone. Incoming thought (*khāṭir*) is the name of



something that comes spontaneously to the heart. Although the term incoming thought (*khāṭir*) is commonly applied to all thoughts or whatever comes to consciousness, *ṣūfīs* apply it to whatever comes from God, while those things that come from Satan, namely temptations, and those things that come from the *nafs* (lower mind), are called carnal desires (*havājis*).

*Khulāṣah-i Sharḥ-i Ta'arruf, KSTK p.513; cf. in SSE8 p.36*

A number of Sufis, however, have spoken of four kinds of *khawāṭir* – those that come from God, from angels, from Satan, and from the *nafs* (lower mind):

1. The divine address, in which there is never error. Sahl ibn 'Abd Allāh Tustarī calls divine incoming thought (*khāṭir*) the 'first cause', being the striking incoming thought (*naqr al-khāṭir*) that is known for its overpowering strength:

No rejection can make it depart:  
it cannot be removed.

2. The angelic incoming thought (*khāṭir*), which motivates the performance of what is commissioned of or made incumbent upon the wayfarer, and which is beneficial to (the experience of mystical) states. This kind of incoming thought (*khāṭir*) may also be termed inspiration (*ilhām*).
3. The incoming thought (*khāṭir*) that comes from the *nafs*, involves gratification of the *nafs* and is known as *hājis*, carnal desire.
4. The satanic incoming thought (*khāṭir*), which encourages one to oppose God. According to the *Qur'ān*, "Satan promises you impoverishment and enjoins you to lewdness."<sup>2</sup> The Prophet said, "Satan's speech denies God and promises evil." Satanic incoming thought is also called temptation (*waswās*).

Each of the incoming thoughts (*khawāṭir*) must be judged in terms of the *shar'* (Muslim religious law). If a given incoming thought (*khāṭir*) invites one to God and another does not compete with it, then it is divine. If it invites one to do good, but another obstructs it, then it is angelic. If the incoming thought (*khāṭir*) is questionable or contrary to the Law and may be negated by a little concentration, then it is satanic. If it is insistent, then it comes from the *nafs*. For the pure-hearted sincere one who is present with God, it is easy to distinguish between the different kinds of incoming thought, with God's blessing.

*Shāh Nīmat Allāh Valī, Rasā'il, RNV4 pp.158–59, in SSE8 pp.37–38*

Given the propensity of the mind for self-justification of its desires and negative inclinations, the degree of “pure-hearted” sincerity required “to distinguish between the different kinds of thought”, even allowing for “God’s blessing”, is considerable. According to Rūmī, the worldly man’s “mother” is the *nafs*, and that applies to the majority of human beings.<sup>3</sup>

Other Sufis have suggested further categories and subdivisions of incoming thought. This analysis of the various kinds of thought is more or less in agreement with the saying, “As a man thinks, so he becomes.” The Sufis said that the *khāṭir al-naḥs* (thoughts of the lower mind) lead a person into darkness, away from God, while the *khāṭir al-rūḥ* (thoughts of the spirit) lead a person towards the spirit, towards God. Consequently, control of thoughts, however they are analysed, is the first step in spirituality.

1. Rūmī, *Maṣnavī* VI:2773–85.
2. *Qur’ān* 2:268.
3. Rūmī, *Maṣnavī* VI:1437.

**khidhlān** (A), **khizlān** (P) *Lit.* abandonment; in Sufism, grace (*luṭf*) withdrawn; contrasted with grace bestowed. Sufis speak of expansion (*bast*) and contraction (*qabḍ*) in spiritual life. Expansion is when the grace of the Divine is evident, as in times of ecstasy and mystical experiences. Contraction is when the devotee feels spiritually dry within, and may even feel abandoned. In fact, both are essential aspects of spiritual development.

See also: **bast**, **qabḍ**.

**kihō ittai** (J), **jīfǎ yītǐ** (C) *Lit.* unity (*ittai*, *yītǐ*) of sentient beings (*ki*, *jī*) and the *Dharma* (*hō*, *fǎ*); union of the practitioner and the *Dharma*; a Japanese Pure Land Buddhist belief that a believer who recites the *nembutsu* is essentially one with the Buddha Amitābha (J. Amida), to whom the *nembutsu* is addressed; they are, as it were, of one substance. The *nembutsu* is the *mantra*, “*Namu Amida Butsu* (Homage to the Buddha of Infinite Light).”

According to *Jōdo* Pure Land belief, the celestial *buddha* Amitābha took a number of vows, including:

If, when I attain buddhahood, sentient beings in the lands of the ten directions (*i.e.* all lands) – who sincerely and joyfully entrust themselves to me, desire to be born in my land (S. *sukhāvatī*, J. *gokuraku*), and think of me even ten times (*nāizhì shínìàn*) – should not be born there, may I not attain perfect enlightenment. Excluded, however, are those who commit the five grave offences (killing one’s father, mother,

or an *arhat*; creating disharmony in the *saṃgha*; causing a *buddha* to bleed) and abusing the right *Dharma*.

If, when I attain buddhahood, sentient beings in the lands of the ten directions who awaken aspiration for enlightenment do various meritorious deeds and sincerely desire to be born in my land, should not, at their death, see me appear before them surrounded by a multitude of sages, may I not attain perfect enlightenment.

*Larger Sukhāvātī-vyūha Sūtra* 6:18–19, T12 360:268a–b; cf. TPSN pp.14, 97

The notion of *kihō ittai* serves to emphasize the link between Amitābha's attainment of buddhahood and rebirth in *sukhāvātī* of all those who have faith in him and repeat the sacred *mantra*. It appears in the literature of the *Jōdo Shū*, a branch of Pure Land Buddhism, founded by the Japanese *nembutsu* monk Hōnen (1133–1212). Later, the concept became prevalent in the *Jōdo Shinshū* (also known as *Shin* Buddhism), established by Hōnen's disciple Shinran Shōnin. Shinran Shōnin, who always remained constant to his master, taught that a single invocation of the name of Amitābha with faith is sufficient, since Amitābha has all the power necessary to effect the liberation of his followers. Hōnen himself is said to have repeated the *nembutsu* 60,000 to 70,000 times a day. The idea also persists in the *Seizan-ha* branch of *Jōdo Shū*, and was accepted by the *Jishū* branch, founded by Yūgyō Shōnin (1239–1289), who believed that even faith in Amitābha was not required. After his death, Yūgyō Shōnin's teaching prevailed for around a hundred years before being overshadowed by *Jōdo Shinshū*.

The *Jōdo Shinshū* take the concept somewhat further when they maintain that the devotee and the *Dharma* are also merged into the *nembutsu* itself. The Western scholar James Dobbins elucidates:

Of the six characters used to write the *nembutsu*, the first two, *na-mu*, indicate the believer's reliance on the *buddha* whereas the remaining four, *ami-da but-su*, symbolize the *buddha*'s salvation of the believer. When all six are brought together in a single utterance of faith, the *nembutsu* constitutes the inseparability of the *buddha* and the believer. Hence, the believer, who is limited in religious capacity, and the *buddha*, who is grounded in absolute truth, become one substance (*kihō ittai*). To that extent, the believer's *nembutsu* is not a personal religious practice aimed at acquiring birth in Pure Land; rather, it is Amida's act of ten *kalpas* (aeons) ago, achieving both salvation for the believer and buddhahood for himself.

From the moment that faith arises in the believer and the *nembutsu* is uttered, birth in Pure Land becomes an immediate reality, for there is no longer any division between believer and *buddha*. When a person is united with the *buddha* in this way, all actions – whether physical,

verbal, or mental – are expressions of the *nembutsu* and represent the power of the *buddha* transmuted in the person. Consequently, religious acts in the so-called three spheres of human activity are rejected if originating in the effort of the believer, but are reaffirmed if stemming from the *buddha*'s power.

James Dobbins, *Jōdo Shinshū*, JSMJ p.105

See also: **nembutsu** (8.5).

**kiriya-citta, kriyā-citta (Pa), kriyā-chitta (S)** *Lit.* functional (*kiriya*) consciousness (*citta*); karmically inoperative consciousness; a specific term in the Pali Buddhist *Abhidhamma* (analytical systematization of the Pali *suttas*), referring to a purely functional action that neither results from previous *kamma* (S. *karma*) nor creates new *kamma*; sometimes abbreviated to *kiriya*. In this context, *cittas* refer to the many aspects or expressions of mind and consciousness, as classified in the *Abhidhamma* literature, which are commonly listed as eighty-nine or one hundred and twenty-one, depending on the detail applied to their counting.

*Kiriya-cittas* or *kiriya*s are independent of *kamma*. They are neither wholesome (*kusala*), *i.e.* producing favourable karmic results; unwholesome (*akusala*), *i.e.* producing unfavourable karmic results; or neutral, *i.e.* producing no karmic results; nor are they themselves the result of past *kamma* (*vipāka-kamma*). *Kiriya-cittas* are a *citta* or category of consciousness whose actions produce no results that need to be paid off in the future. Karmically, they are non-binding; they are neutral, producing no future cause or effect. They are largely, but not entirely, the *cittas* associated with *buddhas* and *arahantas* (noble ones, enlightened ones).

The *Abhidhamma* tradition speaks of *ahetuka kiriya-cittas*, which are groundless, causeless or rootless (*ahetu*) inoperative *cittas*, such as the *citta* of involuntarily turning the attention towards an incoming sense impression in the thought process (*citta-vīthi*) by which such impressions are brought to conscious awareness. Since the cause of the *citta* is external to the mind, it is regarded as 'rootless'. This turning of the attention to the five senses is designated five-door turning of the attention (*pañca-dvārāvajjana*), and represents the initial impact of an incoming sensory impression.

Some forms of mental input also come into the category of *kiriya-citta*, and are correspondingly named mind-door turning of the attention (*mano-dvārāvajjana*).

Since no volition is involved in an initial sensory impression, and in some forms of initial mental input, they are designated *kiriya-cittas*. These two are the only categories of *kiriya-citta* experienced by an ordinary person; the remainder are the province of *buddhas* and *arahantas* alone.

An enlightened being conducts himself in a karmically neutral or non-binding manner because he responds to every situation with the highest wisdom, selflessly and impartially, in full awareness of all the ramifications of the circumstances.

The *Abhidhamma* systematization allocates varying numbers of *cittas* to activity in the three realms of existence – *kāmāvacara* (realm of the senses), *rūpāvacara* (realm of subtle forms, patterns, or archetypes), and *arūpāvacara* (immaterial or formless realm). While functioning in this world, an enlightened being performs actions like everyone else, with the presence of the various underlying *cittas*. *Kiriya-cittas* are therefore present in all three realms of existence. The mind of an enlightened being, however, does not produce unwholesome *cittas*, and the wholesome *cittas* that do arise are all *kiriya-cittas*.

See also: **citta**.

**kishin** (J) *Lit.* joyful (*ki*) mind (*shin*); an attitude of deep joy and gratitude with which all tasks are approached.

Dōgen Zenji (1200–1253), founder of the *Sōtō* school of *Zen* Buddhism writes in his *Eihei shingi* (‘Dōgen’s Rules of Purity’) of three essential mental attitudes: *rōshin* (great mind, generous mind), *daishin* (great mind), and *kishin*. Of *kishin*, he writes:

A joyful mind (*kishin*) is the spirit of happiness. You should consider that if you were born in a heaven, you would be attached to pleasures without cease and would not be able to arouse the thought of enlightenment (*bodai-shin*, S. *bodhichitta*). Practice would not be feasible.

*Eihei Dōgen, Eihei shingi, ESED*

Likewise, he says that “if you were born into the realms of hell, hungry ghosts, animals, antigods and the like, or born in circumstances where you suffered from one of the eight difficulties”, you would be unable to serve the *sangha* (Buddhist community). Therefore, he concludes:

How happy a birth! How happy a body! It is the good karmic result of *kalpas* (aeons) vast and great. It is merit that cannot decay... A mind that contemplates and understands things in this way is a joyful (*kishin*) mind.

*Eihei Dōgen, Eihei shingi, ESED*

See also: **daishin**, **rōshin**.

**kiss(es), kiss(es) of his mouth, kiss(es) of love, kiss of God** A touch of the lips as an expression of love, desire, affection, greeting or regard; sometimes used metaphorically in a mystical context, as a part of a family of metaphors centred around the image of the divine marriage of the soul with the divine beloved.

According to an interpretation of the Bible given in the *Talmud*, the prophets Moses, Aaron, and Miriam all died by a kiss from God. The sages of the *Talmud* interpreted the idiom “*al-pi* (at the command of)” in a literal sense, as “by the mouth” of God, from which they inferred that it implied a divine kiss. The process of *midrash* (commentary) and Jewish exegesis of times past frequently included passages taken out of their original context:

The sages (in the *Talmud*) have indicated with reference to the deaths of Moses, Aaron and Miriam that the three of them died by a kiss.<sup>1</sup> They said that the dictum (of Scripture), “And Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab by the mouth of the Lord,”<sup>2</sup> indicates that he died by a kiss. Similarly, it is said of Aaron, “by the mouth of the Lord, and died there”.<sup>3</sup> And they said of Miriam in the same way, “she also died by a kiss.”<sup>4</sup> But with regard to her it is not said, “by the mouth of the Lord”; because she was a woman, the use of the figurative expression was not suitable with regard to her.

Their purpose was to indicate that the three of them died in the pleasure of this apprehension due to the intensity of passionate (divine) love. In this dictum, the sages – may their memory be blessed – followed the generally accepted poetical way of expression that calls the apprehension that is achieved in a state of intense and passionate love for Him – may He be exalted – a “kiss”, in accordance with its dictum: “Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth”, and so on. . . .

(The sages) – may their memory be blessed – mention the occurrence of this kind of death, which in reality is salvation from death, only with regard to Moses, Aaron and Miriam.

*Moses Maimonides, Guide of the Perplexed 3:51, GPM2 pp.627–28*

The nineteenth-century philosopher and scholar Adolphe Franck similarly quotes the *Zohar* on the real nature of such kisses:

“In one of the most mysterious and most exalted parts of heaven, there is a palace of love. The most profound mysteries are there; there are all souls well-beloved by the celestial King, the Holy One, praised be He, together with the holy spirits with whom He unites by kisses of His love.”<sup>5</sup> It is by virtue of this idea that the death of the righteous is called the “kiss of God”. . . . This kiss . . . is the union of the soul with the Substance (Source) from which it springs.

*Adolphe Franck, The Kabbalah; cf. KRPH p.135*

Note also that mystically to “die by a kiss of God” does not necessarily imply physical death. Rather, it entails going through the process of ‘dying while living’, while retaining full consciousness and control – that is: the withdrawal of the soul and mind from the body, leading, ultimately, to the union of the soul with God. But the soul continues to return to the body for as long as its physical existence is not completed.

The metaphor is found in the opening verse of the *Song of Songs*, where the lover (the soul) says of the divine beloved:

Let him kiss me with the kisses (*neshikot*) of his mouth.

*Song of Songs 1:2, JB*

The soul is praying to be taken through the gates of death while still living. A primary means of accomplishing this is through contact with the divine Word. Mystically, what issues from the “mouth” of the Beloved is the Word, the Voice, or the Breath of God. The kiss therefore alludes to the divine creative Power – the source of love – from which all mystic devotees hope to receive a kiss, an intimate touch of the soul by the Spirit, and learn to leave their bodies during spiritual practice.

This meaning is made clear in one of the *Odes of Solomon*, where the devotee is writing of the protection afforded by the Spirit to a trusting soul:

He has richly blessed me,  
and my head is with him.  
No sword can separate me from him,  
nor any blade.  
For I have made ready before death comes,  
and have been sheltered beneath his immortal wings.  
Deathless Life has embraced me,  
and kissed me;  
And from that Life is the spirit which is within me,  
and it cannot die, because it is Life itself.

*Odes of Solomon 28:1–7, OSD pp.124–25*

Later Christian mystics, inspired by the *Song of Songs*, have given similar interpretations:

A kiss is an operation of the sense of touch: in a kiss two pairs of lips touch. There is, however, a spiritual faculty of touch, which comes in contact with the Word, and this is actuated by a spiritual and immaterial sense of touch.

*Gregory of Nyssa, On Canticles I, PG44 cols.780c ff., GGG p.156*

His living, active Word is . . . a kiss, not indeed an adhering of the lips that can sometimes belie a union of hearts, but an unreserved infusion of joys, a revealing of mysteries, a marvellous and indistinguishable mingling of the divine light with the enlightened mind, which, joined in truth to God, is one spirit with him.

*Bernard of Clairvaux, On the Song of Songs 2:2, WBC1 p.9*

The soul is kissed by God when she is elevated above all temporal things and beholds only God's countenance. God then inclines his countenance and kisses her, and his kissing is simply a dissolving of love with Love. One gazes at the other, and neither can do anything without the other. By love are they bound together.

*Book of the Poor in Spirit 3:4.2, BPSG pp.182–83*

The human heart melts with love when it has found God, when it has received from Him the first kiss of faith – it has had its first sight of the infinite treasures of supreme beauty.

*François de Sales, Love of God 2:15, LGFS p.89*

The voice of the soul longing with eternal love and seeking the beauty of her Maker, rings out. "Let him kiss me with the kiss of his mouth," it says; in other words, let him delight me in union with his Son. Faint with love, I long with my whole heart to see my love in all his beauty. But meanwhile may he visit me with his sweet love as I toil and struggle on through this pilgrimage. And may he turn my heart to himself so as to delight me with the warmth of greater and greater love. Until I can see my Beloved clearly, I shall sing at every remembrance of His sweet name; it is never far from mind.

*Richard Rolle, Fire of Love 26, FLRR pp.122–23*

This kiss, which the soul desires of its God, is essential union, or a real, permanent and lasting possession of its divine object. It is the spiritual marriage, . . . where there is a union of essence with essence, and a communication of substance – where God takes the soul for a spouse and unites Himself to it, no longer by persons nor by any act or means, but immediately, reducing all into unity and possessing it in His own unity.

Then it is the kiss of His mouth, and real and perfect possession. It is an enjoyment which is neither barren nor unfruitful, since it extends to nothing less than the communication of the Word of God to the soul.

*Madame Guyon, Song of Songs 1:1, SSSE p.23*



The Father knows each single soul's capacity and understands the right time for a soul to receive the kisses of the Word in lights and insights.

*Origen, On the Song of Songs 1:1, OSS p.62*

See also: **bride** (►4), **dying to live (in Judaism)** (8.3), **lips** (►4), **neshikah**.

1. *Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Baba Batra* 172.
2. *Deuteronomy* 34:5.
3. *Numbers* 33:38.
4. *Cf. Numbers* 20:1.
5. *Zohar, Mishpatim* 2:97a.

**kitmān** (A/P) *Lit.* concealment, reticence; reserve, in the sense of deliberately keeping silent or keeping a secret; from *katama* (to hide); in Sufism, keeping silent about personal inner mystical experiences, and not speaking openly or plainly about mystical realities; similar to *ikhfā'* (concealment), which is said to imply complete silence concerning personal mystical experiences.

Mystics have used a number of images to emphasize the importance of keeping inner experiences secret. Speaking of them has been likened to spending all one's hard-earned savings; to collecting water in a reservoir and then letting it all leak away; to giving pearls to pigs, and so on. The point is the same in all – that the individual stands to lose greatly by divulging these secrets.

The tradition is embodied in such sayings as, “*Man ‘arafa Allāha qalla lisānuhu* (Whoever knows God is dumb).” It is also the meaning of Jesus' observation: “Give not that which is holy to the dogs, neither cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.”<sup>1</sup> These maxims convey the idea that inner communion with the Divine is a secret to be hidden behind a mask of reserve (*kitmān*):

By reason of inner sweetness, I sit with a sour face:  
 From fullness of speech, I am silent,  
     that in the mask of sour-facedness  
     my sweetness may be kept hidden (*nihān*) from the two worlds.  
 In order that this subject may not come to every ear,  
     I am telling only one out of a hundred esoteric mysteries (*sirr*).

*Rūmī, Maṣnāvī I:1760–62; cf. MJR2 p.96*

There are a number of reasons for this reticence. In the first place, the mysteries of divine love cannot be communicated to those who are not ready for it: people only want to hear what they are ready to hear. Moreover, because of the inevitability of misunderstanding, even by seekers of the mysteries,

teachings concerning the inner path are best conveyed by a living guide or master who has experience of what he is talking about and understands the potential pitfalls. Hearing about the mysteries of the inner life can be dangerous for those who are not yet ready and who have no guide:

I would have explained this matter with eager contention,  
 but I fear lest some weak mind may stumble.  
 The points involved are sharp as a sword of steel:  
 if you have not the shield (capacity to understand),  
 turn back and flee!  
 Do not come without a shield against this keen blade,  
 for the sword is not ashamed of cutting.

*Rūmī, Maṣnavī I:690–92; cf. MJR2 pp.39–40*

Moreover, to reveal the secrets learned through gnosis (*maʿrifah*), or direct perception within, is an act of irreverence. It is a breach of the intimacy in the relationship between the lover and the Beloved. Divine “jealousy (*ghayrat*)” insists on *kitmān*, and Rūmī explains that it is this that makes him speak in a fragmentary and incomplete manner. Even so, such hints are valuable pointers to the way:

My words come forth brokenly, O heart;  
 For these words are pearls,  
 and divine jealousy (*ghayrat*) is a mill that grinds them.  
 But, though the pearls be broken into small fragments,  
 they become collyrium for the sore eye of the spirit.

*Rūmī, Maṣnavī IV:341–42; cf. MJR4 p.291*

Speaking in the concealed language of metaphor, Rūzbihān similarly says that this is because God is “jealous” of the mystic’s “friendship with Him”:

Whenever the sincere friend of God (*walīy*) comes to contain God’s will and is beloved of God, God has no desire for anyone else to be aware of that friend or his state, for He is jealous (*ghayūr*) of His sincere friends. According to the *Qurʾān*: “Enjoin believing women . . . not to display their adornment.”<sup>22</sup> God has enjoined His friends to keep their friendship with Him and their state concealed (*kitmān*). However, if the friend’s state becomes revealed spontaneously beyond his control, such a one is forgiven.

Al-ʿĀrif (the gnostic, al-Ḥallāj) said: “Keeping divine friendship concealed (*kitmān*) means awareness of God’s jealous protectiveness (*ghayrat Allāh*).”

*Rūzbihān, Mashrab al-Arwāḥ 14:23, MARB p.249, in SSE11 p.25*

In fact, Rūmī explains that while the perfect mystic may be able to keep complete *kitmān*, an intoxicated mystic who has not yet reached perfection is in danger of falling from those spiritual heights through a subtle infiltration of egotism concerning his advanced spiritual state. It is not always so easy to digest the abundance of God's grace and love, and keep quiet. But if he speaks, he will offend and alienate his Beloved, with the result that he will be deprived of those experiences. Rūmī therefore advises the intoxicated one either to keep silent or to accept spiritual descent:

Close your lips, though eloquence is at your command:  
 breathe not a word – and God best knows the right way.  
 O you who are drunken with the wine of love,  
 you are on the edge of the roof:  
 Sit down or descend, and peace be with you!

Every moment when you enjoy inner bliss,  
 deem that delightful moment to be the edge of the roof.  
 Tremble for fear of losing the delightful moment:  
 conceal it like a treasure, do not divulge it.  
 Lest calamity suddenly befall your plighted love,  
 take heed, go fearfully into that place of ambush.

*Rūmī, Mašnavī IV:2145–49; cf. MJR4 p.390*

The highest goal of mysticism is to be able to ascend through the inner heavens to the divine Essence, consciously and at will, remaining in full control of oneself. The perfect mystic is *ḥākim al-ḥāl* (ruler of the state) rather than *maḥkūm al-ḥāl* (ruled by the state). He must also be able to control his tongue. Perhaps the most famous instance of one who did not maintain *kitmān* is Maṣṣūr al-Ḥallāj who was executed for his exclamation, “*Anā al-Ḥaqq* (I am God)!” According to some Sufis, among them ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt Hamadānī, his execution was to dissuade others from following suit:

We (God) gave him (al-Ḥallāj) the key to the arcanum of mysteries.  
 He revealed Our mystery. So We placed adversity (*balā*) in his way,  
 so that others might take heed and keep our secrets.

*‘Ayn al-Quḍāt Hamadānī, Tamhīdāt 306, TQH p.236, in HSL1 p.333*

Even so, like al-Ḥallāj, Hamadānī was also martyred for his outspoken language. Therefore, Rūmī counsels:

Hark, O mouther, this is the time for mumbling:  
 if you speak clearly to the people, it is a shameful exposure.

*Rūmī, Mašnavī VI:2186; cf. MJR6 p.380*

Similarly, he advises, keep hidden the bright mirror of the soul if it has come to reflect the divine radiance. “Sinai” is an allusion to Moses’ experience of God on Mount Sinai:<sup>3</sup>

Slip the mirror back into the cloth,  
if divine illumination has made your breast a Sinai.

*Rūmī, Maṣnavī I:3552; cf. MJR2 p.193*

In another passage from the *Maṣnavī*, Rūmī alludes to a saying of Ḥakīm Sanāʿī:

When you drink a cup of wine in this ruined place (the world), I counsel you, . . . lay your head where you drank the wine. . . . And when you have drunk it, rub a clod of earth on your lips (keep silent).

*Sanāʿī, Ḥadīqat al-Ḥaqīqat 1, HHGP p.47, HHS p.114; cf. HHG p.77*

Rūmī explains that mystical experience is only understood in the realm of Reality. Speaking of such things in this world is likely to lead only to the ridicule of fools who do not understand:

Hearken to the words of the sage (*ḥakīm*) who lived in seclusion,  
“Lay your head in the same place where you drank the wine.”

When the drunken man has gone astray from a tavern,  
he becomes the children’s laughing stock and plaything.

Whichever way he goes, he falls in the mud,  
now on this side and now on that side,  
and every fool is laughing at him.

He continues like this, while the children at his heels  
are without knowledge of his intoxication  
and the taste of his wine.

All mankind are children except he who is intoxicated with God;  
None is grown up except

he who is freed from sensual desire.

He (God) said, “This world is play and pastime,  
and you are children,”<sup>4</sup> and God speaks truth.

If you have not taken leave of play, you are a child:  
Without purity of spirit,

how can you be fully intelligent like an adult?

*Rūmī, Maṣnavī I:3426–32; cf. MJR2 pp.186–87*

Sufi poetry can also be a form of *kitmān* or deliberate concealment. By describing the relationship of the soul with the Divine as that of a lover with the beloved, using the graphic imagery of romantic and even erotic poetry, the Sufis were safe from accusations of heresy, a ‘sin’ punishable by death.

They could be, and were, falsely accused of debauchery based on their poetry, but not of heresy. Thus, the various parts of the beloved's body served as images for aspects of the mystic journey towards union with God. Likewise, the imagery of wine (divine love), drunkenness (intoxication with divine bliss), the tavern house (the inner meeting place with the beloved), the *sāqī* (cupbearer, master) and so on were all used to develop a language of mystical expression that could be readily understood by Sufis, yet be misunderstood by those who did not understand the mystic path.

See also: **ikhfā'** (8.5).

1. *Matthew* 7:6; cf. *KJV*.
2. *Qur'ān* 24:31.
3. *Exodus* 34:1ff.
4. *Qur'ān* 57:20.

**knowledge** The state of knowing; awareness; consciousness; also, something that is known by any means. Broadly speaking, knowledge can be classified as being of two kinds: that which is gained by direct experience and that which is acquired by thought and study. The two, however, overlap, since analysis and interpretation of direct experience is a human characteristic. It is by the reflection of the intellect on experience that man has developed philosophy, science and so on, as his highest forms of knowledge.

Mystics say that man's knowledge is limited. For instance, he can never be sure that his ideas about things that happen in this world are correct or complete. Mystics say that there is another kind of knowledge – mystic knowledge or mystic experience – through which things become known by a direct perception of inner or otherwise hidden causes and processes. This is the meaning of *gnōsis* as the gnostics of old understood it.<sup>1</sup> It is a direct, revealed knowledge that brings with it its own sense of certainty, born not of belief or analysis but of experience.

Yet, even this kind of knowledge still implies a separation of the knower and the known. The highest mystic knowledge, however, transcends this barrier, which otherwise exists for as long as a soul perceives itself as separate from the Divine. When a soul merges into God, it becomes God. This knowledge is the experience of divine love, a love so complete and unifying that all sense of self is swept away as the knower and the known become one. This is the highest knowledge or *gnōsis* of all. In the circle of such a love, everything is immediate and spontaneous, and all sense of separation between knower and known is swept away.

Many mystics have commented on man's essential ignorance, and on the difference between intellectual and mystical knowledge. Among the ancient Greeks, heralded as the forerunners of Western philosophy, Parmenidēs, who

lived before Plato, famously maintained that “being and (non-conceptual) knowing (*noein*) are the same thing.”<sup>2</sup>

Greek mystical philosophers distinguished their own understanding (*logos*), informed by inner mystical experience, from analytical understanding or reason (*logos*). Such intellectual analysts were known as ‘sophists’. Protagoras, a prominent sophist and teacher of rhetoric, an older contemporary of Plato and the subject of one of his dialogues, was even nicknamed the ‘Logos’ as a result of his reasoned approach to language, education, and other aspects of everyday human existence. The early rhetorician, Gorgias, compares verbal arguments and reasoning (*logoi*) to drugs, which exercise malicious power without the patient’s critical participation, and act as potent tools for manipulating peoples’ behaviour.<sup>3</sup> Plato points out that many sophists teach people what they already believe, and “call such knowledge ‘wisdom (*sophia*)’”:

Each of these paid teachers, whom the politicians call sophists and regard as their rivals, teach nothing more than the opinions of the many, that is to say, of their assemblies; and they call such knowledge ‘wisdom (*sophia*)’.

*Plato, Republic 6:493a*

Plato describes rhetoric as an art of deceit, a means of hiding ignorance in the garb of reasoned argument, like a cook who appeals to the palate while ignoring the health of the eater.<sup>4</sup> He maintains that “contemplation of the True, the Divine”<sup>5</sup> requires a radical transformation of consciousness, not the gathering of information. He understands the highest stage of self-knowledge to be the realization of oneself as a purified and immortal soul in communion with Being.<sup>6</sup>

Socratēs, the best-known of the Greek mystical philosophers, famously disclaimed not only the possession of any knowledge that can be taught and transmitted to others (“I was conscious that I know nothing”),<sup>7</sup> but also the role of a teacher (“I was never anyone’s teacher. . . . I never taught or professed to teach any of them.”)<sup>8</sup> This is because he rejected specialized and expert learning as valid knowledge. Instead, he believed in direct knowing without words or concepts. As he observes, “Things may be known of themselves, without names.”<sup>9</sup>

Even for Aristotle, the great rationalist and father of modern science, true knowledge resided in, “The knowing (*noēsis*) becoming one with the known (*nooumenon*),”<sup>10</sup> an observation later echoed by Plotinus.

In praising true mystical knowledge, Plotinus rejects the dissipating and scattering influence of rhetorical reasoning (*logos*). He places true knowledge of the One, not only beyond the limitations of conceptual knowledge, but even beyond the perception of spiritual realities (*noēsis*):

The perplexity arises especially because our awareness of that One is not by way of reasoned knowledge (*epistēmē*) or by spiritual perception (*noēsis*), as with other intelligible things, but by a presence (*parousia*) surpassing all knowledge. By reasoned knowledge (*epistēmē*) of anything, the soul abandons its oneness and is no longer in unity. For reasoned knowledge (*epistēmē*) is a rational process (*logos*), and a rational process abides in the realm of multiplicity. The soul, thus plunging into number and multiplicity, abandons unity.

*Plotinus, Enneads 6:9.4; cf. PA7 pp.314–15, PEC 356*

Hieroclēs, a fifth-century (CE) Pythagorean, observes that life is best enjoyed by those who realize their own ignorance, and who have the wisdom to understand what is worth knowing, and what is not:

Now these are two excellent things: to know that we do not know, and; to learn what we are ignorant of; and they are followed by the best and most delicious life. But this delicious life is only for him who is free from opinion and replenished with knowledge (*epistēmē*), who is not puffed up with vanity on account of anything he knows, and who desires to learn whatever deserves to be learnt. Now nothing deserves to be learnt but that which brings us to the divine Likeness (*homoiōsis*).

*Hieroclēs, On the Golden Verses of Pythagoras 30–31, HVP p.73*

The pithy Heraclitus (c.535–475 BCE) summarizes the matter:

Much learning (*polymathiē*) does not teach understanding (*nous*).

*Heraclitus, Fragment 6 (40), HPW p.19*

He also points out that even wisdom has degrees:

A man is regarded as childish by a spirit,  
just as a boy is, by a man.

*Heraclitus, Fragment 105 (79), HPW p.90*

And:

The handsomest ape is ugly compared with humankind;  
The wisest man (*sophotatos*) appears as an ape  
when compared with a god –  
In wisdom (*sophia*), beauty, and in all other ways.

*Heraclitus, Fragment 104 (82–83), HPW p.90*

Among more recent Christians, mystics such as John of the Cross speak of the higher knowledge infused into the soul in mystic experience. He says that, in mystic experience, the soul acquires “supernatural knowledge, beside which all the natural and political knowledge of the world is not so much knowledge as ignorance”. He also says:

The draught of the highest wisdom of God makes her (the soul) ... forget all the things of the world. ... It seems to the soul that its former knowledge, and even the knowledge of the whole world, is pure ignorance by comparison with that knowledge. ...

The soul that is led into this highest knowledge knows thereby that all that other knowledge, which has naught in common with this knowledge, is not knowledge but ignorance. And that there is no knowledge to be had from it. And the soul declares the truth of the saying of the apostle (Paul), namely, that that which is greatest wisdom in the sight of men is foolishness in God’s sight.<sup>11</sup> ...

Because the soul is in that exceeding high wisdom of God, ... therefore the lowly wisdom of men is ignorance to it. For the natural sciences themselves, and the very works that are done by God, are as ignorance compared with knowing God. For, where God is not known, naught is known.

*John of the Cross, Spiritual Canticle 26:13, CWJC2 pp.315–16*

He also acknowledges that to men of the world, mystical knowledge seems like ignorance, as does worldly knowledge to those who have had mystical experience:

Wherefore the high places of God are ignorance and foolishness to men, as St Paul says likewise.<sup>12</sup>

Hence, the divinely wise and the worldly wise are each ignorant in the other’s estimation. For the latter cannot apprehend the wisdom and science of God, neither can the former apprehend those of the world.

*John of the Cross, Spiritual Canticle 26:13, CWJC2 p.316*

In another place, the same writer speaks of the completely transcendent nature of mystic experience. The knowledge the soul then gains is of a fundamentally different character to normal human knowledge:

In this divine union, the soul sees and tastes abundance, inestimable riches, finds all the rest and the recreation that it desires, and understands strange kinds of knowledge and secrets of God, which is another of those kinds of food that it likes best.



It feels likewise in God, an awful power and strength which transcends all other power and strength. It tastes a marvellous sweetness and spiritual delight, finds true rest and divine light, and has lofty experience of the knowledge of God. . . .

Likewise, it feels itself to be full of good things and far withdrawn from evil things and empty of them. And, above all, it experiences and has fruition of an inestimable feast of love, which confirms it in love.

*John of the Cross, Spiritual Canticle 14–15.4, CWJC2 p.248*

Such an experience clearly makes the greatest impression on the soul. But the most vital aspect of it is not the acquisition of a higher kind of knowledge, but the experience of divine love.

See also: **gnōsis, mystical experience.**

1. See **gnōsis**.
2. Parmenidēs, *Fragment B3*, in *DK1* p.231.
3. Gorgias, *Praise to Helen, Fragment B11*, in *DK2* p.292.
4. Plato, *Gorgias*, *passim*.
5. Plato, *Phaedo* 84a.
6. Plato, *Republic* 10:611b–612a.
7. Plato, *Apology* 22d; cf. *PEA* pp.84–85.
8. Plato, *Apology* 33a–b; cf. *DP1* pp.357–58.
9. Plato, *Cratylus* 438d–e; cf. *DP3* p.104.
10. Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1075a:2–5.
11. *1 Corinthians* 3:19.
12. *1 Corinthians* 2:14.

**know thyself** (*Gk. gnōthi seauton*) An injunction of the Greek Oracle at Delphi, quoted by a great many writers, preachers, and philosophers. The origin of the saying is uncertain, and it has been attributed to a number of the ancient Greek philosophers. According to Diogenes Laërtius (*fl.c.*C3rd CE), when the Greek philosopher Thalēs, who taught the “immortality of the soul” and that “death is no different from life”, was asked, “What is difficult?” Thalēs replied, “To know oneself,” and Diogenes credits him with originating the maxim.<sup>1</sup>

Essentially, the expression admonishes man to seek knowledge of himself, ignorance of one’s true nature being the primary centre of ignorance from which all other ignorance stems. Whatever other knowledge a person may have – or thinks he has – and whatever it may enable him to do in the physical world, it remains the person himself who has that knowledge. And if that

person does not know the nature of his real self, then all his knowledge is related to that point of ignorance. It is therefore founded upon ignorance, and as such cannot be regarded as absolute knowledge.

Many mystics have spoken of the soul's true knowledge of itself. The Neoplatonist, Plotinus, writes that when the soul partakes of God, she sees herself as pure "spiritual light":

The soul also, proceeding to and having now arrived at the desired end and participation in God, will know that the giver of true Life is then present. . . . She will see herself illuminated and full of spiritual light; or rather, she will perceive herself to be pure light, unburdened, floating free, raised to godhood – or, rather, being God – and shining forth; but the light goes out once more if the soul should again take up the discarded burden.

*Plotinus, Enneads 6:9.9; cf. PEC p.359, SWP p.318*

The Hermetic literature of the early Christian era also says that whoever abandons the senses and leaves the body, "knows himself to be of light and life" and to be "filled with bliss":

Whoever, by His mercy, gains this birth in God, abandoning the body's senses, knows himself to be of light and life, and that he consists of these, and is filled with bliss.

*Hermetica 13:10; cf. TGH2 p.226*

According to the *Sentences of Sextus*, a Pythagorean text of uncertain provenance, knowing the nature of God leads automatically to knowledge of the self:

Know what God is,  
and what there is in you which knows God. . . .  
If you know Him by whom you were made,  
you will know yourself.

*Sentences of Sextus, ILP p.197*

This is because the soul, which is the real self, is of the same essence as God. This implies that such knowledge is available to everyone:

All men share the ability to know themselves,  
and to control themselves.

*Heraclitus, Fragment 9 (116), PAC2 p.101*

To know oneself is the essence of the philosophy of Socratēs, who advised turning from the study of outer matters to the study of one's own being. In

*Phaedrus*, he is asked about certain allegorical interpretations of Greek mythology. He replies that although he finds such explanations attractive, to investigate them would consume a great deal of time; and since there will never be an end to it, he would rather spend the time studying the nature of his own self:

I have no time for such enquiries and the reason is, my friend, that I've not yet succeeded in obeying the Delphic injunction to "know myself," and it seems to me absurd to consider matters concerning other beings while I am still in ignorance about my own nature.

*Plato, Phaedrus 229e–230a; cf. DP3 p.136, PPL p.25*

Like the term 'self-realization', 'know thyself' has been understood to refer both to knowledge of one's human nature and characteristics, as well as to mystical knowledge of the soul's innermost essence. The early Christian father, John Klimakos, takes it to mean the former. Alluding to Jesus' parable of the sower,<sup>2</sup> he says that a person who has acquired this kind of realization or awareness is like one who has sown his seed in fertile ground. His life has borne fruit:

The man who has come to know himself with the full awareness of his soul has sown in good ground.

*John Klimakos, Ladder of Ascent 25, LDAC p.223*

And likewise Richard Rolle:

You who are giving up the world in the attempt to follow Christ in poverty must strive to know yourself.<sup>3</sup>

*Richard Rolle, Fire of Love 27; cf. FLML (1:27) p.114, FLRR p.127*

Richard of St Victor says that self-knowledge is the height of all knowledge or "science":

If the mind should desire to ascend to the heights of knowledge, let its first and principal study be to know itself. Full knowledge of the rational spirit is a great and high mountain. This mountain transcends all the peaks of all mundane sciences, and looks down upon all the philosophy and all the knowledge of the world from on high.

*Richard of St Victor, Benjamin Minor 75; cf. in CSK p.xv*

And again:

Be sure of this: he who wants to see God must first cleanse his soul, for it is a mirror that reflects everything clearly, so long as it is clean. When the mirror is dirty, nothing is seen clearly. So with the soul:

when it is dirty you can neither know yourself nor God. When a candle is burning you can see the candle itself by its own light, as well as other things. Similarly, when your soul is burning with the love of God, and your heart is feeling a continual desire to love him, then by the light of His grace, which He infuses into your reason, you will be able to see both your unworthiness and His great goodness.

*Richard of St Victor, Benjamin 10; cf. LPD pp.119–20, SWT pp.19–20*

See also: **gnōsis, knowledge, self-knowledge.**

1. Diogenes Laërtius, *Lives of the Philosophers* 1, *Thalēs* 9.
2. *Matthew* 13:3–9, 18–23.
3. *Matthew* 10:39.

**kōng, xū, xūwú** (C) *Lit.* emptiness (*kōng, xū*); nothingness, openness, space; empty, hollow, void, vacuous; in Daoism, the essential Void or Nothingness that is the *Dào*; also, the ideal state of mind of the Daoist preparing for union with the *Dào*, and the state of consciousness that is ultimately attained. *Xūwú* is literally translated as ‘empty (*xū*) nothingness (*wú*)’, but is commonly rendered as ‘Nothingness’ or the ‘Void’.

The present-day Daoist scholar Stuart Olson describes the spiritual meaning of emptiness from a Daoist perspective:

Many people have difficulty understanding the concept of emptiness and why it is the goal of meditation. Lù Sixīng (medieval Daoist commentator of the *Míng* dynasty) quotes in his appended verses, “The term emptiness embraces the entire teaching.”

Emptiness is not empty. It is full of light. If we do not empty ourselves, light cannot enter. The obstacles of distraction and obscurity block the light of our true nature. In our Western society, many psychologists have expressed their fears about the idea of emptiness or no-thought. Their mistake (and lack of experience) in this matter has been their inability to understand that it is not thought that is cut off, for the very nature of non-thinking requires thought. Rather, it is the attachment to thought that ends. The six senses are not cut off, but the attachment to them is. It is not that the seven emotions are eradicated, but that they no longer control your actions. Emptiness is therefore achieved through non-attachment to thought and sense data. There is an enormous difference between the idea of no-thought (extremist view) and that of non-attachment to thought.

If you can steadfastly sit, illumination will occur. There is no secret other than patience. Our minds are no different from the clouds and rain. If we are patient, they will pass and the bright sun will shine. The

deep blue skies are then filled with light. This sky is like the empty mind, and the *shén* (spirit) is the light.

Stuart Olson, *Jade Emperor*, JEMS p.205

The *Scripture for Daily Internal Practice*, a Southern Sòng dynasty (1127–1279) meditational text by an unknown author, describes entering the spiritual realms as “dwelling in emptiness”:

If you can contemplate the inner realms,  
spirit (*shén*) will automatically begin to make itself known.  
This is dwelling in emptiness (*xū*) and nonbeing:  
the place where you can dwell with the sages (*shèng*).

*Nèi riyòng jīng*, DZ645 1b; cf. HDP6 p.21

In his *Discourse on Sitting in Forgetfulness*, master Sīmǎ Chéngzhēn (C8th) says that dwelling in this “nothingness” results in an empty state of mind that automatically merges with the ultimate emptiness of the *Dào*:

Dwelling in nothingness (*wúsuǒyǒu*),  
unattached even to the slightest thing,  
you will automatically enter the Void (*xūwú*).  
Then the mind (*xīn*) will become one with the *Dào*.

*Sīmǎ Chéngzhēn*, *Zuòwàng lùn* 3, DZ1036 3a, JY213

Master Lǐ Dàochún (C13th) describes the standard Daoist route to merging with the emptiness of the *Dào*, pointing out that the objective is no different from the goal of other paths, including Buddhism:

The Daoist practice of embracing the Origin (*bàoběn*) and returning to the Void (*kōng*) is to refine vital essence (*jīng*) into life energy (*qì*), refine life energy (*qì*) into spirit (*shén*), and refine spirit (*shén*) into emptiness (*xū*). It is embracing the Origin and returning to the Void (*xū*). It is the same principle as the Buddhist practice of returning to emptiness (*kōng*). There is no difference between the two.

*Lǐ Dàochún*, *Zhōnghé jí*, DZ249, JY226

In Daoist philosophy, form is manifested out of the primordial Void or Nothingness (*i.e.* *Dào*). Master Wáng Jiè (C14th) explains that the purpose of human life is to seek to return to that Void. Cultivating open emptiness of the spirit requires prior emptying of the human mind:

Form is created from Emptiness (*xū*). After form emerges, it seeks to return to Emptiness (*xū*). Mind and spirit are originally empty (*xū*). Energy (*qì*, subtle life energy), however, has form. If the mind is

empty (*xū*), the spirit will be calm and energy will be plentiful. If the mind is wayward, the spirit will leave and energy will be diminished. The mind of the sage is always empty (*xū*) because he knows how to cultivate his spirit and energy.

*Wáng Jiè, Dàoxuán piān 35, DZ1075; cf. NEL pp.39–40*

Wáng Jiè also says that an empty mind automatically sees all the imperfections of the human mind:

If the mirror is empty (*xū*) and clear, you will automatically see the devious ways of the human mind. If the mind is empty (*xū*) and clear (*míng*), you will automatically know the difference between good and bad. In emptiness (*xū*), form is exposed; in clarity, desire is revealed. Form and desire are both illusions, not part of the underlying Reality (*i.e. Dào*). Therefore, the great sages have always valued emptiness (*xū*).

*Wáng Jiè, Dàoxuán piān 15, DZ1075; cf. NEL pp.32–33*

Master Liú Yīmíng (1734–1821) expands on the theme of evolution from the primeval Void or Nothingness (*xūwú*) to form, and the reversion of form back into the Void. Alluding to the *Dàodé jīng*,<sup>1</sup> he outlines how the “one Energy (*yīqì*)” by which all else is created, arises from the Void:

The *Dào* of (original) nature and (true spiritual) life is the *Dào* of creation and transformation (*zàohuà*). The *Dào* of creation and transformation (*zàohuà*) is the *Dào* of creating over and over again, unceasingly. Tracing the source of this back to the *Dào*, one Energy (*yīqì*) is created by the Void (*xūwú*). From the one Energy, heaven and earth or *yīn* and *yáng* are created. *Yīn* and *yáng* then join, having the one Energy within them, creating three bodies. Once these three bodies have been created, the one Energy moves – from *yīn* to *yáng*, from *yáng* to *yīn*. In this way, the myriad things are created.

Just as the growth of plants and trees begins with a single seed germinating in the ground, so is the one Energy created by the Void (*xūwú*). Once emerged from the ground, the seedling opens into two leaves: these are *yīn* and *yáng*, created from the one Energy. Then a stem grows up from between the two leaves: this is *yīn* and *yáng* joining to create three ‘entities’. From this, branches and leaves grow: this is the three ‘entities’ creating repeatedly, so that the myriad things develop.

All sentient or insentient beings between heaven and earth are created by this one Energy of the Void (*xūwú*). They all follow the current of the *Dào* in creation and transformation (*zàohuà*). Those who cultivate the *Dào* understand the current of creation and transformation

(*zàohuà*) and practise it in reverse, returning multiplicity to three, three to two, two to one, and one to the Void (*xūwú*), then Emptiness (*wúshēng wúxiù*, ‘no sound, no smell’) is reached.

*Liú Yīmíng, Wùzhēn zhízhǐ, ZW253, DS17*

Offering two examples from the material world, master Liú Yīmíng explains the spiritual and behavioural practice required in order to return to the “Great Void”, which is the *Dào*:

A bell will ring when struck. A drum will resonate when beaten. It is because of the emptiness inside their physical form, having nothing inside, that they are able to make a sound.

As I observe this, I realize that this is the *dào* (way, principle) of the true emptiness (*kōng*) that is required to achieve sublime existence.

True emptiness (*kōng*) is like the hollowness (*kōng*) inside a bell or a drum. Sublime existence is like the ringing of a bell or a drum when struck. If human beings can sustain a focus on true emptiness (*kōng*) as their essence, they will activate their sublime existence. Then that emptiness will be constantly still (*jìng*), yet constantly flexible; ... silent (*jìrán*) and motionless (*bùdòng*), yet unhindered and spontaneously knowing. It will be empty (*kōng*), yet not empty (*bùkōng*). ... It will be spiritually conscious and unhindered, present and pervading. In the great furnace of creation, emptiness (*kōng*) is gradually refined until impurity is cleansed and the mirror becomes clear; the clouds disperse and the moon emerges, revealing the enduring and indestructible spiritual body (*fǎshēn*), transcending *yīn* and *yáng* and all creation, merging with the eternity of the Great Void (*tàixū*).

*Liú Yīmíng, Wùdào lù, ZW268, DS18*

See also: **gǔshén**, **tàixū** (►1), **xūxīn** (8.5).

1. *Dàodé jīng* 42.

**kshaya-jñāna** (S), **zad pa shes pa** (T), **jìn zhì** (C), **jìn chí** (J) *Lit.* knowledge (*jñāna*, *shes pa*, *zhì*, *chì*) of elimination (*kshaya*, *zad pa*, *jìn*); knowledge of cessation; certainty that the ten fetters (*saṃyojana*), the afflictions (*kleshas*) and the impurities (*āsravas*) have been eliminated; one of the two kinds of *jñāna* that accompany liberation from birth and death, the other being *anupāda-jñāna* (knowledge that the *kleshas*, *āsravas* and *saṃyojanas* will not arise again); *kshaya-jñāna* precedes *anupāda-jñāna*; listed among the ten *jñānas* according to the *Abhidharma* (analytical) texts of the *Sarvāstivāda* school of early Buddhism.

*Kshaya-jñāna* and sometimes *anutpāda-jñāna* are also aspects of the culminating stage of the five-stage path (*pañcha-mārga*) to enlightenment described by the many early forms of pre-*Mahāyāna* Indian Buddhism, and also carried forward into the later *Yogāchāra* school. At this final stage, enlightenment is attained and the practitioner is said to have become an *ashaiksha* (not a learner, not a disciple).

See also: **anutpāda-jñāna**, **jñāna**, **pañcha-mārga** (►4).

**ladhdhah** (A), **laẓẓat** (P) *Lit.* taste, flavour, delight, rapture, pleasure, bliss; spiritually, the joy resulting from contact with the divine Beloved within. Rūzbihān describes something of this inner “pleasure”:

When the lover drinks the wine of nearness from the chalice of exhilaration (*al-aqdāḥ al-farāḥ*), he experiences pleasure (*ladhdhah*). Once he tastes the sweetness of that wine in his inner being, the higher level of tasting (*dhawq*) is attained, and this is the inward journey of the light of contemplative vision (*mushāhadah*) within the source of the inner consciousness (*sirr*). Have you not read the words of the Prophet, where he asks God, “I beg of You the pleasure (*ladhdhah*) of gazing upon Your beneficent aspect.” Thus, he had come to realize that pleasure (*ladhdhah*) comes hand in hand with the revelation of contemplative vision (*mushāhadah*): it is more complete than tasting (*dhawq*).

Al-ʿArif (the gnostic, al-Ḥallāj) said, “Pleasure (*ladhdhah*) is to experience the taste of union at the sight of the (divine) Beauty (*Jamāl*).”

*Rūzbihān, Mashrab al-Arwāḥ* 7:2, MARB p.129; cf. in SSE2 p.102

Rūzbihān explains that the pleasure experienced by the soul, the “holy servant”, upon entering the *ʿālam al-jabarūt* (realm of power), is a blessing bestowed by God as a reward:

Whenever the holy servant sets foot in humility upon the carpet of the realm of power (*jabarūt*), being meek before the angelic realm, he is honoured by God with service to Him, and God nurtures him with His lovingkindness, so that the servant may experience the purity of contemplative vision (*mushāhadah*) in his spiritual practice. He drinks the wine of submission from the sea of purity blended with joy-bringing nectar. Ultimately, his whole being becomes purified due to the pleasure (*ladhdhah*) he experiences in seeking union in nearness to God and the purity of spiritual practice....

Al-ʿArif said: “The reality of worship lies in experiencing the pleasure (*ladhdhah*) of lovingkindness arising from God, informing



the sincere worshipper that He loves him. God gives him the wine of lovingkindness as a reward for his worship, saying, according to the tradition, “My servant approaches me through supererogatory (*nawāfil*) practice until I love him.”<sup>1</sup>

*Rūzbiḥān, Mashrab al-Arwāḥ 1:30, MARB pp.21–22; cf. in SSE12 p.147*

Al-Jīlī speaks of the perfect man who has gone beyond the planes of the divine Names and Attributes, and feels throughout his entire being, “a pervasive delight, which is named the delight of the Godhead (*ladhdhat al-ilāhīyah*)”.<sup>2</sup>

1. *Ḥadīth Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* 8:76.509; cf. HSB.

2. Al-Jīlī, *al-Insān al-Kāmil* 2:60, IKJ p.280, in SIM p.107.

**laya** (S/H) *Lit.* absorption, destruction, dissolution, melting, merging, disappearance, annihilation; mystically, absorption of the mind in deep concentration, the merging of the soul with the Absolute; union with the Divine; the annihilation of self; also, dissolution of the universe (also called *pralaya*); used in *Dvaita Vedānta* (Dualistic *Vedānta*) for final liberation.

The mind has the capacity to merge or become absorbed, to a greater or lesser extent, into any object of concentration or contemplation. Gazing at cloud formations in the sky, for example, or at a beautiful vista, can result in a sense of the mind’s merging with the scene before the eyes. The mind is itself modified into the form it perceives. The same thing happens when listening to beautiful music with intense concentration.

*Laya* refers to any kind of absorption or dissolution. Mystically, the mind and soul can become absorbed in more or less anything in creation, in this or higher realms, although any absorption below that of the Supreme is to be regarded, ultimately, as a hindrance. In *Advaita Vedānta*, for instance, *laya* is one of the four obstacles to be overcome. In this context, it refers to a kind of sleepiness or torpidity that the mind may enter when it has become detached from the world, but does not enjoy the inner bliss:

If the mind does not succeed in being established in *Brahman* after it has been detached from the world, it often lapses into a state of sleep or torpidity (*laya*). A kind of stagnation sets in. The aspirant is reluctant to make fresh efforts. His progress is slowed down.

*Swami Nikhilananda, Introduction, SKS pp.136–37*

Torpidity (*laya*) is the lapse of the mental state into sleep because of the failure to rest on the Absolute.

*Sadānanda, Vedāntasāra* 210, VSY p.114

The other three obstacles are *vikshepa* (material distraction), *kashāya* (deep-rooted attachment, sensual enjoyment), and *rasāsvāda* (perceived pleasure), which implies satisfaction with a level of bliss lower than the Supreme. The torpidity of *laya* is understood as an expression of *tamoguṇa*, the *guṇa* of darkness and inertia. Similarly, the outward nature of *vikshepa*, either as the projection of the three worlds of the mind or as the outgoing tendencies of the human mind, is understood as an expression of *rajoguṇa*, the active outgoing *guṇa* (attribute).

*Laya* is also used to indicate that everything is a part of the Divine. Everything is merged or dissolved in Him:

The entire universe, movable and immovable,  
is permeated by Him.  
Everything is merged (*laya*) in Him like bubbles in the sea.

*Chūlikā Upanishad 17; cf. in PU p.123 (n.3)*

In Me alone is everything born; in Me alone does everything exist, and  
in Me alone does everything get dissolved (*laya*). I am that *Brahman*  
without a second.

*Kaivalya Upanishad 19*

Like bubbles in water, the worlds arise, exist and dissolve (*laya*) in the  
supreme Self, which is the cause and support of everything.

*Shankara, Ātmabodha 8; cf. ABSC p.14*

Or as Kabīr writes, speaking from the divine perspective:

I am in all; all that exists is Me.  
The different forms in existence  
are My myriad manifestations,  
yet I am apart from all.

*Kabīr, Granthāvalī, Pad 50, KG p.81, KWGN pp.463–64*

As a state of inward absorption of the mind and soul, the *Haṭha Yoga Pradīpikā* describes the nature of the experience:

When *prāṇa* and mind are in *laya*, indescribable ecstasy is created.  
When inhalation and exhalation are suspended, and sense enjoyment  
is annihilated, when there is no effort, and a changeless state of mind  
occurs, the *yogī* experiences absorption (*laya*).

All strong desires being entirely eliminated, and the body motionless, results in absorption (*laya*), which can be known only by the self, and is beyond the scope of words.

Where the attention is directed, absorption (*laya*) occurs. That in which the elements, senses and *shakti* exist externally, which is in all living things, both are dissolved in the characteristicless.

People often talk of *laya*, but what is meant by it? *Laya* is simply the forgetting of the things of the senses when previously deep rooted desires (*vāsanās*) no longer recur.

*Haṭha Yoga Pradīpikā* 4:30–34; cf. *HPSD* pp.139–41, *HYP* (4:29–33) p.51

The same text also maintains that “There is . . . no absorption (*laya*) like that in the *nāda*,”<sup>1</sup> and that the best way to achieve this state is through listening to the mystic sound (*nāda*) within:

*Shrī Ādinātha* (i.e. *Shiva*) mentioned one and a quarter crore<sup>2</sup> ways of attaining absorption (*laya*), but we consider *nādānusaṃdhānaka* (exploration of *nāda*) to be the best of all *layas*.

Sitting in *muktāsana* and concentrated in the *shāmbhavī-mudrā* (*Shiva’s mudrā*), the *yogī* should listen attentively to the inner *nāda* heard in the right ear. . . .

In my opinion, contemplation between eyebrows (*bhrū-dhyāna*) hastens the state of transcendent mind (*unmanī*). It is an easy means even for those of less intellect to attain the state of *rāja yoga*. The absorption (*laya*) attained through *nāda* soon results in bliss.

*Haṭha Yoga Pradīpikā* 4:66–67, 80; cf. *HPSD* pp.154–55, 162

Therefore, the seventh- or eighth-century Tamil devotee and poetess Avvaiyar prays:

Bless me with self-realization,  
and remove the root cause for the evils resulting from birth!  
Grant me the state of *manolaya* (absorption of the mind),  
which is beyond speech and thought,  
and make my mind pure and serene!

*Avvaiyar, Vinayakar Akaval* 28–29, in *SSI7* pp.116–17

‘Ināyat Khān equates the Indian *laya* with the Sufi *fanā*’ (annihilation of the self):

In order to be, one must pass through a stage of being nothing. In Sufi terms this is called *fanā*, when one thinks, “I am not what I had always thought myself to be.” This is the true self-denial, which the Hindus called *laya* and the Buddhists ‘annihilation’. It is the annihilation of the false self, which gives rise to the true self; once this is done, from that moment, man approaches closer and closer to God, until he stands

face to face with his divine Ideal, with which he can communicate at every moment of his life. The law of God is endless, as limitless as God Himself, but once the eye of the seeker penetrates through the veil which hangs before him, hiding from his eye the real law of life, the mystery of the whole of life becomes manifest to him, and happiness and peace become his own, for they are the birthright of every soul.

*'Ināyat Khān, Sufi Message, SMIK9 p.174*

See also: **laya yoga** (8.5), **pralaya** (5.2).

1. *Haṭha Yoga Pradīpikā* 1:45; cf. *HPSD* p.21.
2. One crore is ten million.

**lè** (C) *Lit.* to be happy, to be cheerful; laughter, joy, bliss; spiritual happiness; often used in compound nouns, such as *kuàilè*, *xǐlè* (both meaning happiness or bliss), *rénlè* (human joy) and *tiānlè* (heavenly joy).

Spiritual bliss or joy is automatically experienced when the spirit is in constant attunement with the *Dào*. Such a state of harmony with heaven automatically results in harmony with earth and all humanity. This is the state of the sage, who is completely identified with the primordial *Dào*:

He who has a clear understanding of the nature of heaven and earth may be called the 'Great Source' or 'Great Ancestor'. He harmonizes with heaven; and, by so doing, he brings equitable accord to the world and harmonizes with human beings as well. To harmonize with human beings is called human joy (*rénlè*); to harmonize with heaven is called heavenly joy (*tiānlè*).

Zhuāngzǐ has said, "This teacher of mine (the sage)! Ah, this teacher of mine! He passes judgment on the ten thousand things, but he does not think himself severe; his bounty extends to ten thousand generations, but he does not think himself benevolent. He is older than the most ancient antiquity, but he does not think himself long-lived; he canopies heaven, upholds the earth, carves and fashions countless forms, but he does not think himself skilled."<sup>1</sup> Such is the heavenly joy (*tiānlè*) (of the sage).

*Zhuāngzǐ* 13

The Daoist sage is also in complete harmony with *yīn* and *yàng*, the essential duality in all created things. The nature of pure *yīn* is stillness; the nature of pure *yāng* is spiritual transcendence. Therefore, the sage lives in heavenly bliss, finding no fault with anyone or anything on earth:

He is one who knows the joy (*lè*) of heaven. In living, he walks in heaven. In death, he transcends the physical. His stillness (of mind) is of the same nature (*dé*) as (pure) *yīn*. His movement (*dòng*) (of spirit) rides the same wave as (pure) *yáng*. Therefore, he who knows heavenly joy (*lè*) murmurs not against heaven nor finds fault with people. . . .

Hence it is said, “His movement (*dòng*) is of heaven; his stillness (*jìng*) is of earth. With his mind absolutely still (*dìng*), he is the sovereign king of the universe. . . . From his emptiness (*xū*) and stillness (*jìng*), his Word spreads throughout heaven and earth, universally pervading all things (*wànwù*). Such is the heavenly joy (*tiānlè*) (of the sage). This heavenly joy (*tiānlè*) infuses the mind of the sage (*shèngrén*), whereby he nurtures everything under heaven.”

*Zhuāngzǐ* 13

Daoist sages and masters recognize that worldly happiness is short-lived, whereas true and permanent heavenly happiness is a natural result of union with the *Dào*. Although they have taught this truth since time immemorial, the sages know that very few accept their teachings and put them into practice. In a chapter of the *Zhuāngzǐ* (c. C3rd BCE) entitled ‘Perfect Happiness (*zhìlè*)’, the writer presents himself as finding it difficult to believe that people continue to seek happiness outside in the world, instead of in the spiritual dimension. Having himself found the path to everlasting and natural heavenly happiness, he maintains that he cannot understand the view of happiness entertained by worldly minded people and is unable to “accept their standards”:

I cannot tell if what the world regards as happiness (*lè*) is happiness or not. All I know is that, when I consider the way they go about attaining it, I see them carried away headlong, grim and obsessed, in the general onrush of the human herd, unable to stop themselves or to change their direction. All the while, they claim to be ‘just on the point’ of attaining happiness (*lè*).

For my part, I cannot accept their standards – whether of happiness (*lè*) or unhappiness (*bùlè*). I ask myself if, after all, their concept of happiness has any meaning whatsoever.

My opinion is that you will never find (true) happiness until you stop looking for it. My greatest happiness consists in doing precisely nothing whatever that is calculated to obtain happiness.

*Zhuāngzǐ* 18; cf. *WCTM* p.101

The *Book of the Masters of Huáinán* (C2nd BCE) similarly observes that true joy is spiritual, and does not consist of worldly pleasures and satisfactions, however luxurious or sumptuous they may be:

Joy (*lè*) does not lie in wealth and honour, but consists in the possession of virtue (*dé*) and harmony (*hé*). Knowing the greatness of the higher self (*jǐ*) and according little value to the possession of empire is indeed to be near the *Dào*.

What is it that is called joy (*lè*)? How is it necessary to live in palaces and castles, to be serenaded on lakes and in gardens, to listen to renowned orchestras, to dine on seasoned meats, to gallop down broad avenues, or to shoot the turquoise kingfisher in order to find joy? How can it be said that joy (*lè*) consists in these?

The joy (*lè*) I speak of is the finding of the true self (*wú*). The possessor of this true life will not regard ostentatious expenditure as joy (*lè*), nor will the simple life be looked upon with regret (*bēi*). He will accept his lot, whether high or low – just as a flower opens and closes in response to the time of day. . . .

The sage (*shèngrén*) will not allow his person to be the instrument of material things, nor permit his peace to be disturbed by desire (*yù*). Thus, when he rejoices, it is not with boisterous hilarity. When he sorrows, he does not suffer his true nature to be wounded. Circumstances ever change and vary; there is nothing stable about life's conditions. The man of *Dào* (*dàorén*) alone lives triumphantly, abandoning worthless things. He keeps step with the *Dào*. Therefore he has the wherewithal to find his true nature. Whether his pilgrimage be under a stately tree or his dwelling in a secluded cave, he finds enough to satisfy his true nature.

But the man who has not found his true self – though he possess an empire for his home and myriad people for his ministers and concubines – will not, because of that, find satisfaction in life.

He who reaches the state of spiritual joy (*lè*) will find that everything brings joy (*lè*) to his person; and he who enjoys this joy (*lè*) has tasted the greatest joy (*jǐlè*).

*Huáinánzǐ* 1, DZ1184; cf. TGLE pp.21–22

Keeping the mind in tune with the *Dào* is fundamental to stilling the mind. A tranquil mind will lead a practitioner to elevated levels of consciousness. On reaching those superior levels of consciousness – where the mind is quiescent in the stillness of contemplation or meditation – spiritual energy, which is truly blissful, is experienced. For the Daoist who is consistent in his spiritual practice, feelings of bliss and freedom from the mundane are always present. However, as master Lǐ Dàochún (C13th) describes, such a person conceals his attainment and his inner bliss, so that he may live in the world without appearing different:

In stillness (*jìng*),  
attune your breathing.

In action (*dòng*),  
 yield to others' wishes.  
 In concealing attainment,  
 appear to be the same as the world.  
 In containing the light,  
 hide its radiance within.  
 In true freedom,  
 be present with true bliss (*lè*).  
 In constant stillness (*jìng*),  
 be constantly pure (*qīng*).

*Lǐ Dàochún, Zhōnghé jí, DZ249, JY226*

Spiritual immortality and eternal bliss result from attaining oneness with the *Dào* through meditation. In pursuit of this end, Shuǐjīngzǐ (aka. Zhào Yīmíng, fl. C16th) presumes that a seeker will receive instructions from an enlightened master:

Ask your teacher to show you how to transcend life and death:  
 when you have received the instructions, practise diligently. . . .  
 When you have been granted immortality  
 in the palace of *wújí* (the Limitless),  
 you will become an immortal living in bliss (*kuàilè*).

*Shuǐjīngzǐ, Qīngjìng jīng (1) túzhù; cf. CSTM p.5*

See also: **fú** (8.4), **sukha**, **xǐnùāilè** (►4).

1. *Zhuāngzǐ* 6.

**letting go** Generally, relinquishing one's grasp of something; spiritually, relinquishing one's mental hold on the sense of individual self, of worldly things and attachments, *etc.*, thereby gaining freedom from them; giving up all attempts to analyse or intellectualize inner experience, letting the soul flow towards God; suspending all imagination and thought concerning one's surface life in the world, in order to go into deeper meditation; also, surrender to the divine will, as in the expression, "Let go, and let God."

François de Sales depicts the mystical meaning:

How does the soul flow into God? The lover is so gratified by what he loves that a form of spiritual powerlessness results. This causes the soul to feel that it can no longer contain itself. That is why, like molten balm, soft and running, it lets itself go; lets itself flow into what it loves. Here is no soaring flight, no close embrace of union; the soul, as

though it were a liquid flowing, glides gently unto the God it loves. . . . The loving soul . . . melts and flows out of itself towards its Beloved – not merely to be close to Him, but to blend into one with Him.

Clearly then, you see, this flowing of the soul out of itself into God is an actual ecstasy, in which the soul utterly transcends the limits of its natural state, until it is blended, absorbed, and swallowed up in God. As a result, people who achieve this intensity of divine love find – after they come round from their ecstasy – that nothing this world has to offer can satisfy them.

*François de Sales, Love of God 6:12, LGFS pp.251–52*

Regarding external life, writing of the “magnificent, . . . mysterious, . . . blessed . . . collection of wonders” that comprise the “way of pure faith” and self-abandonment to God, Jean-Pierre de Caussade asks:

What has to be done to produce such an amazing effect? Just one thing: let God act and obey Him in everything, each according to his capacity. Nothing in the spiritual life is easier, and it is within everybody’s reach. . . . To let God act and obey His demands on us: that is the gospel and the whole scripture and the law. . . . Let God’s will be done and abandon yourself to Him!

*J.-P. de Caussade, Abandonment to Divine Providence 4:8, 7, 6;*

*cf. ADP pp.85, 84, 82, SPM p.123*

Meister Eckhart also extols the virtues of abandonment in God by letting go of self:

This above all else is needful: you must lay claim to nothing! Let go of yourself, and let God act with you and in you as He will. This work is His, this word is His, this birth is His, in fact every single thing that you are. For you have abandoned self and have gone out of your (own) powers and their activities, and your personal nature. Therefore, God must enter into your being and powers, because you have bereft yourself of all possessions.

*Meister Eckhart, Sermons 3, STE1 p.33*

Thomas Kelley writes of the zealous and “self-sufficient religionist”, who – in his self-appointed zeal – fails to let go, forgetting that God is always present:

Our task is to encourage others first to let go, to cease striving, to give over this fevered effort of the self-sufficient religionist trying to please an external deity. . . . God is the seeker, and not we alone; He



is anxious to swell out our time-nows into an eternal now by filling them with a sense of presence.

*Thomas Kelly, Testament of Devotion, TDK p.72*

Johann Tauler also speaks of the person who tries too hard, greatly exercising himself in trying to do the right thing, but never really surrendering to the Divine:

He who will not let go of himself, but does right by labour and toil,  
will never reach the highest that he might.

*Johann Tauler, Sermons 4, HLT p.224*

Concentrating the idea in poetic form, John Byrom (1691–1763) writes:

Let go all earthly will, and be resign'd  
wholly to Him with all your heart and mind!

*John Byrom, Letter from Jacob Behmen 85–86, in OEMV (53) p.87*

While Angelus Silesius likens letting go to the soul's own "Ascension Day":

If upward you can soar, and let God have His way,  
then this has, in your spirit, become Ascension Day.

*Angelus Silesius, Cherubic Wanderer 4:56, CW p.90*

See also: **abandonment of self**.

**liànxíng** (C) *Lit.* refinement (*liàn*) of the form (*xíng*); purification of the body; a term with a range of meaning, depending on the context. *Xíng* can refer either to the physical body, which includes both gross and subtle aspects of physical embodiment, or to all that is not formless (*wúxíng*). Refining or purifying the *xíng* can mean either refining the physical embodiment or, in a wider context, refining the embodiment of the formless *Dào* at all levels below that of the *Dào* itself. Only the *Dào* is formless, so in the latter context *xíng* encompasses all material and non-material forms – all that is not the undifferentiated *Dào*.

Embodiment of the *Dào* is what constitutes an 'individual' spiritual being at any level of existence. *Nèidān* (inner alchemy) and other traditions maintain that the locus of self-cultivation and self-refinement is not only the physical embodiment but the entire embodiment in form (*xíng*), which must be transcended for attainment of the *Dào*. Ascent to ultimate union with the *Dào* is an inner spiritual journey of transformation, which presupposes a form or embodiment that is neither restricted to the material body nor yet

entirely formless. The term *shēnwài shēn* ('embodiment beyond the body') has a similar meaning.

On the other hand, *liànxíng* can also mean purification of one's physical embodiment. The words on an inscription, dated to 829 CE and carved into a rock monument at Mount Wángwū in what is now the Chinese province of Hénán, summarize the teachings of master Sīmǎ Chéngzhēn (C8th). Using the standard description of spiritual practice according to the *nèidān* (inner alchemy) tradition, the inscription begins:

My late master told me that sitting in forgetfulness (*zuòwàng*, meditation) is the foundation of eternal life (*chángshēng*). Thus, we harbour Truth to refine the body (*liànxíng*, i.e. the vital essence or *jīng*); once the body is pure, we merge with *qì* (life energy). To refine *qì* (*liànqì*), we embrace the *Dào*; once *qì* is pure, we merge with the spirit (*shén*). When one's entire being (*tǐ*, embodiment) is absorbed in the *Dào*, we speak of 'realizing the *Dào* (*dédào*)'.

*Zhāng Hóngmíng, Zuòwàng piān, in Dàoshū, DZ1017 2:7a, SCJS; cf. SSTK p.113*

To "harbour truth" means to purify the mind, while – in this context – "to refine the body" implies the refinement of *jīng* (vital essence), the first of the three *nèidān* stages of refining the *jīng-qì-shén* (vital essence, subtle life energy, spirit).

Master Chén Yīngníng (C20th) speaks of six forms of *liànxíng*. The first five, depicted symbolically, refer to various ways of purifying the subtle aspects of the body. It is only the sixth method that is able to bring about union with the Great Void, which is the *Dào*:

There are in total six methods of refining the form (*liànxíng*). The first is to refine the form (*liànxíng*) with jade liquid; the second is with gold liquid; the third is with great *yīn*; the fourth is with great *yáng*; the fifth is by inner contemplation (*nèiguān*). None of these five methods constitute the great path of emptiness, and they are unable to make one's entire being (*tǐ*, embodiment) one with the Great Void (*tàixū*). This last method of refining the form (*liànxíng*) with true emptiness may be called practice, but in truth it is non-practice. It may be called refining the form (*liànxíng*), but in truth it is refining the spirit (*liànshén*). It is a method of internal and external cultivation.

If you practise refinement following the right method for one hundred days, then the seven passions will dissolve, the three negative tendencies will vanish, the six bandits (the five senses, plus the aspect of the mind that engages in perception) will slip away into hiding, and the ten disturbances will run far away. If you practise it for one thousand days, then the big four (*sìdà* – *Dào*, heaven, earth, and human

beings) will merge into one like a crystal tower, clear and pervading both inside and out. Then the flower of the mind (*xīn*) will be radiant, and the spiritual light (*língguāng*) will manifest.

*Chén Yīngníng, Sūn Bù'èr nǚgōng nèidān cìdìshī zhù, SBNN*

Master Chén Yīngníng also explains that *liànxíng* means to rise above the thinking spirit (*shíshén*) – the thinking and knowing aspect of the mind, the intellect – in order to discover the original spirit (*yuánshén*) that is inherently endowed with true knowledge or gnosis:

The original spirit (*yuánshén*) in human beings does not change throughout aeons of experience. What changes is the thinking spirit (*shíshén*). The practice of refining the form (*liànxíng*) using true emptiness is gradually to remove the thinking spirit, so that the original spirit (*yuánshén*) is gradually revealed. It is like polishing a mirror: when the dirt is completely wiped away, a reflection appears. Then you will know that all knowledge (*zhī*) exists inherently in the original nature (*běnxìng*) of every human being, and that it is not external.

*Chén Yīngníng, Sūn Bù'èr nǚgōng nèidān cìdìshī zhù, SBNN*

See also: **liànjǐ** (8.5), **shēnwài shēn** (8.2), **shǐjiě** (8.3).

**liberation** Spiritually, attainment of the state of spiritual freedom or liberty; release from pain, suffering, and the individual self; the freedom of a soul released from every constraint of body, mind, and all created things; hence also, release from the cycle of birth and death; salvation; also, in Christianity especially, release from sin, evil, and so on.

Release of the immortal soul from transmigration and bondage to the body was a doctrine fundamental to Greek mysticism. It was taught by Orpheus, Pythagoras, Empedoclēs, and others. Plato speaks of it in several places,<sup>1</sup> and the same idea is echoed by Plotinus, six centuries later:

Our task, then, is to work for our liberation from this sphere, severing ourselves from all that has gathered about us. The total man is to be something better than a body ensouled – the bodily element dominant with a trace of soul running through it. . . . There is another life, emancipated, whose quality is progression towards the higher realm, towards the Good and Divine.

*Plotinus, Enneads 2:3.9, PEC p.45*

Many of the gnostics of early Christian times likewise taught liberation of the soul from the body – a view at odds with the doctrines of the Church.

In his attack on ‘heresies’, Irenaeus gives an unsympathetic account of the beliefs of the followers of Carpocratēs. Here, “experience of every kind of deed” is most probably a misunderstanding of the need to clear the effects of all actions before a soul can be liberated from rebirth:

No one can escape the power of those angels who made the world, without passing from body to body until he has had experience of every kind of deed that can be performed in this world; and when he entertains no further desires, then his liberated soul will soar upwards to God, who is above the angels, the makers of the world.

*Irenaeus, Against Heresies 1:25.4; cf. AH1 pp.95–96*

Philo Judaeus, a first-century Alexandrian Jew well versed in Greek philosophy, also speaks of the soul’s liberation from worldly bondage by service to God:

Which of the wisely minded, when he sees the tasks that many men endure and the extravagance of the zeal that they commonly exert to win money or glory or the enjoyment that pleasure gives, would not in the exceeding bitterness of his heart cry aloud to God the only saviour to lighten his burden, and provide a price for the soul’s salvation and redemption into liberty? What then is the liberty that is really sure and stable? Indeed, what? It is the service of the only wise Being.

*Philo Judaeus, On the Confusion of Tongues 20; cf. PCW4 pp.58–61*

Masters or saviours who come from beyond the material realm to bring liberation to captive souls are free beings. As Jesus said, “My yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”<sup>2</sup> Understanding Jesus as a saviour of this calibre, in the *Acts of John*, the apostle John describes Jesus:

Oh, what greatness that came down into bondage!  
Oh, what unspeakable liberty, brought into slavery by us!  
Oh, what incomprehensible glory, that is come unto us!

*Acts of John 77; cf. ANT p.247*

In the *Acts of Thomas*, Judas Thomas, knowing that the time of his death is near, describes Jesus as the “liberator” who will bring him true “liberty” of the soul:

O liberator of my soul from bondage to the many, . . .  
Lo, I shall escape from sorrow, and put on joy alone. . . .  
Lo, I shall be set free from bondage,  
and shall go to the liberty to which I am called.

*Acts of Thomas 142; cf. AAA pp.276–77, ANT p.426*

Similarly, Judas Thomas is himself described as one who – by coming into the bondage of the body – has brought many to spiritual liberty. He is described as:

Twin of Christ, apostle of the Most High  
and initiate in the hidden Word of Christ,  
receiver of the secret mysteries of the Son of God,  
who being free has become a slave,  
and being sold has brought many into liberty.

*Acts of Thomas 39; cf. AAA p.180, ANT p.383*

The praise relates to an allegorical story told at the beginning of the *Acts of Thomas*, where Judas Thomas is sold as a slave to the Indian King Gundaphorus, by his twin brother and master, Jesus.<sup>3</sup>

Spiritual liberation and bondage to the body is a recurrent theme in Christian literature. The soul is understood to be in bondage to the senses. Freedom comes by untying the knot that binds them together:

To give free rein to the senses is to shackle the soul; to shackle the senses is to liberate it. . . . Suspend, then, your gossip with the outer world, and fight against the thoughts within until you find the abode of pure prayer and Christ's dwelling place. Thus you will be illumined and mellowed by his knowledge and his presence, enabled to experience tribulation for his sake as joy, and to shun worldly pleasure as you would bitter poison.

*Theoliptos, On Inner Work, Philokalia, PCT4 pp.179–80*

The soul cannot enjoy “true liberty” until the senses and desires are overcome:

Until the desires are lulled to sleep through the mortification of the sensual nature, and until at last the sensual nature itself is at rest from them, so that they cannot make war upon the spirit, the soul goes not forth to true liberty and to the fruition of union with its Beloved.

*John of the Cross, Ascent of Mount Carmel 1:15.2; cf. CWJC1 p.62*

The essence of the matter lies in the will – that which thinks it is free. Yet a person who strives to assert his own will, against the flow of the divine will, always experiences distress:

Those who ever strive against God's will and would gladly further their own wills, must feel pain. They have no more peace than is to be had in hell, for they are always in tribulation and sadness. On the other hand, to a liberated spirit, God and peace are ever present, in disagreeable as in pleasant circumstances, for it is He indeed who does everything, and who is everything.

*Henry Suso, Life of the Servant 1:32, LSS p.96*

The will that is truly free is the will that has surrendered to the divine will. Even so, God does not impose His will upon the soul, but allows it liberty to find its natural state of alignment to Him:

The masters declare that the will is so free that none can bind it except God alone. God does not bind the will, He sets it free in such a fashion that it wills naught that is not God Himself, and that is real freedom. And the spirit cannot will otherwise than as God wills, and that is not its bondage but its true liberation.

*Meister Eckhart, Sermons 16, STE1 p.136*

The matter is unquestionably paradoxical; one that is only resolved when the sense of individual self is entirely abandoned:

You will not have perfect liberty of mind unless you wholly forsake yourself. All possessors of worldly goods and all lovers of themselves, all covetous persons, all curious, all vainglorious, all who gad about, all who pursue the transitory things of this world, greedily seeking those that will not long endure, and not the things of Jesus Christ, are as men fettered and bound with chains. They have no perfect liberty, or freedom of spirit, for all things not wrought by God will perish.

*Thomas à Kempis, Imitation of Christ 3:32, IC pp.152–53*

Among the Manichaeans, the ultimate spiritual goal as well as the divine agenda was the release of souls, the particles of light, from imprisonment in matter, so that they could return to God, the supreme divine Light. For this purpose, the *Nous* or *Vahman*, the divine Mind, Intelligence or Word, is sent from God, from beyond the realm of birth and death. Taking birth in this world as a saviour, he makes his presence known to his chosen ones. Then, as a Manichaean hymn puts it, “The living Word of Truth liberates him who was bound.”<sup>4</sup>

The saviour was called by many epithets. In a Middle Persian text, the saviour is the “Liberator and saviour of that goodness and light of God”.<sup>5</sup> In a hymn, Jesus is described as “liberated sovereign”,<sup>6</sup> while in the texts from Chinese Turkestan, an unknown devotee prays:

I petition only that Jesus will have mercy,  
and liberate me from the bondage of all devils and spirits.  
I am now living in the pit of fire:  
quickly guide me into the peace of the clean and pure land!

*Mónfǎjiào xiàbù zàn, T54 2140:1271a28–29; cf. LSMH (35) p.179*

The same text, speaking of the “great saint (*dàshèng*)” and of emancipation from birth and death, also says that he brings

deliverance for the robbed,  
liberty for the entangled and bound,  
ease and peace for the oppressed,  
joy and happiness for the troubled and afflicted.

*Mónjiào xiàbù zàn*, T54 2140:270c22–23; cf. *LSMH* (17–18) p.177

See also: **deliverance, freedom, salvation.**

1. E.g. Plato, *Phaedo*, *passim*; *Theaetetus* 176a–b.
2. *Matthew* 11:30, *KJV*.
3. *Acts of Thomas* 1.
4. *Manichaean Hymns*, *MM3* p.870ff., *RMP* ax, *GSR* p.47.
5. *Manichaean Text*, *MM1* p.177ff., *ML* pp.123–24.
6. *Manichaean Hymns*, *MM2* p.312ff., *RMP* bt, in *GSR* p.65, *ML* p.107.

**líng** (C) *Lit.* quick, alert, alive (*líng*); to be aware; awareness, intelligence, understanding; soul, spirit, spiritual world; spiritual, numinous; spiritually elevated; having spiritual, mysterious, or holy qualities; also used in honorific titles, such as the *Língbǎo* (‘Sacred Jewel’) school of Daoism, established towards the end of the fourth century CE.

The seventh-century Daoist master Sūn Sīmiǎo explains that once a sufficiently high level of spirituality has been reached, the consciousness is free to escape at will from the “mundane world” and “its numerous transformations”:

With immortality perfected (*chéngxiān*), the spirit (*líng*) – freely able to appear in and disappear from the mundane world – is liberated from its numerous transformations. This is what we call ‘going beyond the world’... When the body is in a state of joy and the mind is constantly at peace, the spirit (*líng*) attains a vision of the profound and the mysterious.

*Sūn Sīmiǎo, Cúnshén liànrì míng* 1b, 2b; cf. *SSTK* p.120

In his writings, Liú Yīmíng (1734–1821) makes extensive use of the wide spread of meaning associated with *líng*. In one passage, he discusses the need for the mind to become empty so that it may become a suitable receptacle for spiritual awareness. He speaks of the *língqì* (spiritual energy) that lies at the heart of a human being who is empty of thoughts and emotions:

If a person can become empty (*xū*) at the inner centre, this is the valley (*gǔ*). Within the emptiness (*xū*) at the centre is concealed a drop of spiritual energy (*língqì*). This is the spirit (*shén*).

This valley (*gǔ*) is silent and still; perception is unimpeded and universally penetrating. Only the valley (*gǔ*) empowers the spirit

(*shén*). If there is no valley, there is no spirit. The subtlety of the spirit lies in the valley (*gǔ*).

Worldly people are full of egoistic desires that clog up the spiritual opening (*língqiào*). They are soiled in a hundred different ways. How can they become the valley (*gǔ*)? Without the valley (*gǔ*), they are utterly deluded and unconscious, as if intoxicated or dreaming. With their spiritual energy (*língqì*) dispersed, how can they possess the spirit (*shén*)? With the spirit (*shén*) lost, they are alive but as if dead.

If you can truly sweep away all attachments, clear all accumulated blockages, and become naked without any covering, then the empty (*kōng*) valley (*gǔ*) will automatically manifest. It is undifferentiated and abstruse (*huǎnghū*), having both substance and essence (*jīng*). It is spirit beyond spirit, responsive to every call, the highest spiritual consciousness (*líng*). Externally, it pervades creation; internally, it withdraws and conceals itself, flowing thereby throughout both heaven and earth.

*Liú Yīmíng, Wùdào lù, ZW268, DS18*

In *Xiàngyán pòyí* ('Smashing Doubts on Symbolic Language'), master Liú Yīmíng again underlines the relationship between emptying the mind and spiritual consciousness:

In cultivation of the *Dào* (*xiūdào*), *gǔshén* (valley spirit) is used as an analogy for the spirit (*shén*) within the human body that is empty (*xū*) and conscious (*líng*). This is because only when the mind is empty, can it be (truly) conscious (*líng*). When the mind is not empty, it cannot be (truly) conscious (*líng*). Consciousness (*líng*) arises from emptiness, which is why it is also called the valley spirit (*gǔshén*).

*Liú Yīmíng, Xiàngyán pòyí, ZW247, DS14*

The spiritual opening (*língqiào*) mentioned by Liú Yīmíng is another name for the "mysterious female (*xuánpìn*)", the 'opening' within the mind that automatically appears when all thought and emotion is stilled. Then the mind or spirit is automatically filled with golden light, and the original, "true consciousness (*zhēnlíng*)" is revealed:

The *Wùzhēn piān* ('Treatise on Awakening to Reality') says, "To attain the eternal immortality of the valley spirit (*gǔshén*), it is necessary to establish your foundation on the mysterious female (*xuánpìn*). When the true essence (*zhēnjīng*) has returned to the room of gold (*huángjīn shì*, room of golden light), the pearl of spiritual light (*língguāng*) will never leave."



When the mysterious female (*xuánpìn*) is merged in the centre, then it is empty. When it is empty, then true consciousness (*zhēnlíng*) is always present and never veiled. True essence (*zhēnjīng*), spiritual light (*língguāng*) and the valley spirit (*gǔshén*) are all metaphors for the same one true consciousness (*zhēnlíng*).

*Liú Yīmíng, Xiàngyán pòyí, ZW247, DS14*

Sometimes, *líng* and *shén* are used interchangeably; sometimes in support of each other:

Within the body (*shēn*) is another ‘body’: this ‘body’ is called the celestial mind (*tiānxīn*). When the celestial mind is anchored and still, it keeps the workings of the spirit (*shén*) in balance. Consequently, that which directs all things will be empty and conscious (*líng*). When the spirit is clear and conscious (*líng*), the ten thousand things will return to the *Dào*. When consciousness (*líng*) is distracted by the phenomena of the world, we stray from our natural course (towards the *Dào*). This is not because the *Dào* has distanced itself from humanity, but because humanity has distanced itself from the *Dào*.

*Wáng Jiè, Dàoxuán piān 2; cf. NEL pp.27–28*

And in the *Huáinánzǐ* (c.139 BCE):

Saints (*shèngrén*) commit their spirit (*shén*) to the home of consciousness (*língfǔ*) and return to the beginning of the myriad things (*wànwù*). What they see is the deep profundity (*míngmíng*); what they hear is silence (*wúshēng*). Within deep profundity (*míngmíng*), there is the one and only clarity (*xiǎo*). Within the silence (*jì*), they find the one and only radiance (*zhào*).

*Huáinánzǐ 2, DZ1184*

An early instructional treatise of the *Quánzhēn* school (estb.C12th) concerning the ‘great mystery (*tàixuán*)’ says that this kind of elevated consciousness is the province only of human beings:

The conscious spirit (*shénlíng*) is particular to human beings. When it is bright and virtuous, it is the spirit (*shén*). When it is attached to desire and evil, it becomes a demon (*guǐ*). Those who cultivate Reality must banish this demon and permit the spirit (*shén*) to emerge.

*Tàixuán bǎodiǎn, DZ1034; cf. NEL (1:3.5) p.87*

See also: **yíling**.

**língzhī** (C) *Lit.* diffuse (*líng*) knowledge (*zhī*), reflected knowledge; cognizant knowledge; the diffused reflection of direct mystical or true knowledge (*zhēnzhī*) at all levels other than that of the *Dào* itself. See **zhī**.

**locutions** Words; in spirituality, verbal communications from God or the manifestation of God's thought; verbal communications from a spirit – good or evil – or even from the devil; may appear to be heard externally (exterior or auricular locutions), or by the imaginative faculty (interior imaginative locutions), or conveyed without any words (interior intellectual locutions), a classification also used of visions.

The content of locutions can vary widely. Some are concerned with matters of faith and understanding; some concern the inner character of the recipient; some give guidance in life, which may seem minor at the time but can turn out to be of considerable significance. Others can be extensive, can give clear instruction, and can be repeated on several occasions. Mother Teresa of Calcutta, for example, believed that she was instructed directly by Jesus to start her mission to the poor.<sup>1</sup> Likewise in *Acts*, St Paul, on the road to Damascus, having fallen to the ground, hears the voice of Jesus, as do his companions.<sup>2</sup> John of the Cross observes that although locutions from God are always true, the defective understanding of the recipient may mean that they are sometimes misunderstood.<sup>3</sup> It is also possible that locutions may in fact come from the subconscious mind of the recipient, according to the mindset and belief system of the individual.

Francisco de Santo Tomás provides a clear definition of the three types of locution:

Some are corporeal, some imaginary, and some spiritual or intellectual. Corporeal locutions are those actually heard by the physical powers of hearing. . . . Imaginary locutions are not heard in that way, but the impression apprehended and received by the imaginative faculty is the same as though they had been. . . . In spiritual or intellectual locutions, God imprints what He is about to say in the depth of the spirit: there is no sound, or voice, or either corporeal or imaginary representation of such, but an expression of (certain) concepts in the depth of the spirit and in the faculty of the understanding, and as this is not corporeal, but spiritual, the species or similitudes under which it is apprehended are not corporeal, but spiritual.

*Francisco de Santo Tomás, Médula mística 6:1, in CWT2 p.279 (n.1)*

Various types of locution are also described by Teresa of Ávila, much of whose life was guided by them:

There is another way in which God awakens the soul, and which, although in some respects it seems a greater favour than the others, may also be more perilous. For this reason, I will spend a short time in describing it. This awakening of the soul is effected by means of locutions, which are of many kinds. Some of them seem to come from without; others from the innermost depths of the soul; others from its higher part; while others, again, are so completely outside the soul that they can be heard with the ears, and seem to be uttered by a human voice. Sometimes – often, indeed – this may be a fancy, especially in persons who are melancholy – I mean, are affected by real melancholy – or have feeble imaginations.

*Teresa of Ávila, Interior Castle 6:3, CWTA2 p.279*

She goes on to say that locutions described by these sort of people should not be taken seriously, although the individuals need to be handled with kindness and tact. The sceptic will naturally think that all such locutions are a matter of the imagination. St Teresa, however, maintains that there is a difference:

Locutions ... may come from God, in any of the ways I have mentioned, or they may equally well come from the devil or from one's own imagination.

*Teresa of Ávila, Interior Castle 6:3, CWTA2 p.280*

She goes on to describe at considerable length how to differentiate the real locutions from the false. Firstly, she says, the locutions should agree with the scriptures and carry with them the imprint of authority. A single, “Be not troubled”, for example, can completely calm a soul that is in inner turmoil. Secondly, after a genuine locution, “a great tranquillity dwells in the soul, which becomes peacefully and devoutly recollected.” Thirdly, the “words do not vanish from the memory for a very long time: some, indeed, never vanish at all”. This is contrary to

words which we hear on earth – I mean, from men, however weighty and learned they may be – we do not bear so deeply engraved upon our memory, nor, if they refer to the future, do we give credence to them as we do to these locutions. For these last impress us by their complete certainty.

*Teresa of Ávila, Interior Castle 6:3, CWTA2 p.281*

She also adds:

The genuine locution is so clear that, even if it consists of a long exhortation, the hearer notices the omission of a single syllable, as

well as the phraseology which is used; but in locutions which are created fancifully by the imagination, the voice will be less clear and the words less distinct; they will be like something heard in a half-dream.

*Teresa of Ávila, Interior Castle 6:3, CWTa2 p.284*

She further says that a genuine locution takes place when the soul “remains in a kind of rapture”, and the normal thinking faculties that would form words are in abeyance. Moreover, some of the things conveyed are beyond the capacity of the intellect to have invented:

The faculties are in such a state that even though they are not lost, they do hardly anything. They are as though absorbed and incapable of putting sentences together. There are so many ways of understanding the difference between the two kinds of locutions that though a soul may be misled once, it will not be misled often. . . . In the locutions that come from God, we are taught without losing any time; things are understood that it seems would require a month to compose, and the intellect itself and the soul are amazed at some of the things that are understood.

*Teresa of Ávila, Life 25:5, 8, CWT1 pp.215–16*

See also: **visions**.

1. Joseph Langford, *Mother Teresa of Calcutta, MTC1*.
2. *Acts* 9:3–7.
3. John of the Cross, *Ascent of Mount Carmel* 2:19.1–5, *CWJC1* pp.140–42.

**luàn** (C) *Lit.* confusion, disorder. See **huò**.

**lucid dreaming, conscious dreaming** A dream in which the dreamer becomes aware that he or she is dreaming, and can actively participate in and manipulate the imagery and ‘events’ of the dream. According to the degree of self-awareness, lucid or conscious dreams can be exceptionally real and vivid.

Generally, most people who remember their dreams have at some time awoken sufficiently to realize that they are dreaming, but they then fully awaken and return to normal waking consciousness; and at that point, dreaming stops. However, it is possible to continue in the dream while remaining fully aware that one is dreaming. This is lucid dreaming. Distinct from lucid dreams are ‘false awakenings’, where the dreamer dreams of waking up but is actually still asleep.

The term ‘lucid dreams’ was coined by the Dutch author and psychiatrist Frederik van Eeden (1860–1932) in his 1913 article “A Study of Dreams”,<sup>1</sup> although the paper, being highly anecdotal, was not embraced by the scientific

community. Some consider the term a misnomer because lucid dreaming consists of much more than just clear or vivid dreaming. Others have observed that 'lucid' implies insight as well as clarity of vision. To avoid these confusions, some researchers have preferred the term 'conscious dreaming'.

Lucid dreaming has been the focus of a number of research studies, and a number of books have been written on the subject. Lucid dreams are associated with REM (rapid-eye-movement) sleep, during which normal dreams occur. It seems that dream vision stimulates eye movements that correspond to the direction in which the subject would be looking if viewing the dream events and images with physical eyes.

Studies of the physiology associated with the initiation of lucid dreaming have revealed that lucid dreams can begin in one of two ways. In the commoner variety, the dream-initiated lucid dream (DILD), the dreamer becomes aware of being in a dream while still fully involved in it. DILDs occur when dreamers are in the midst of the REM sleep, in which dreaming occurs. DILDs account for about eighty percent of lucid dreams that dreamers have experienced in a laboratory setting. Present-day researcher D. Scott Rogo records one of his own experiences of this type:

One of my own lucid dreams occurred one morning after I had gotten up, read a little on lucid dreaming, and dozed off on the couch. I dreamed that I was in a pool room with a young lady. We left the building and, as I turned around, the girl disappeared in a flash. This puzzled me, so I went back into the pool hall, only to find that it had been completely redecorated. From this incongruity, I realized that I was dreaming. I did not awake, but I gave myself the suggestion to remain asleep so that I could experiment with my dream environment. I had the time of my life flying about and deliberately trying to achieve an expanded state of consciousness. Finally, I ordered myself awake.

*D. Scott Rogo, Leaving the Body, LBAP p.135*

Representing the other twenty percent is the lesser variety, the wake-initiated lucid dream (WILD). In these, dreamers report awakening from a dream, and then returning to the dream state with unbroken awareness. One moment, they are aware that they are awake in bed in the sleep laboratory; the next moment, they are aware that they have entered a dream and are no longer perceiving the room around them.

Many methods, not necessarily mutually exclusive, have been developed for stimulating the onset of lucid dreams. These include hypnosis and psychological techniques, manipulation of the sleep and dream cycle by altering the time and duration of sleep, the ingestion of certain neurotransmitters, and the use of various devices that detect when a sleeper has entered the REM phase and then trigger a noise, a flashing light, or a vibration. All of these techniques involve an effort of will and the conscious intention to remain aware while dreaming.

Various theories have been put forward by scientific researchers to explain how a conscious state (waking) can be superimposed upon a subconscious state (dreaming). It is believed that there are personal benefits to be gained from an experience in which a person can exercise conscious control over the subconscious mind.

Lucid dreaming is not a modern discovery. It is referred to, for instance, in a letter by St Augustine in 415 CE. During the eighth century, Tibetan Buddhists are said to have practised a kind of *yoga* intended to maintain full waking consciousness while in the dream state. A related form of Tibetan meditation aims to maintain consciousness while asleep – lucid dreaming being a secondary effect.

The philosopher and physician Sir Thomas Browne (1605–1682) was fascinated by the world of dreams and described his own ability to lucid dream in his *Religio Medici*: “In one dream, I can compose a whole comedy, behold the action, apprehend the jests, and laugh myself awake at the conceits thereof.”<sup>2</sup>

Marquis d’Hervey de Saint-Denys was probably the first person to argue that it is possible for anyone to learn to dream consciously. In 1867, he published *Les Rêves et les moyens de les diriger: Observations pratiques* (‘Dreams and How to Guide Them: Practical Observations’) in which he documented more than twenty years of his own research into dreams.<sup>3</sup>

Research suggests that the same people tend to have both lucid dreams and OBEs (out-of-the-body experiences). Frederik van Eeden was a frequent lucid dreamer who began experiencing OBEs six months after his first lucid dream, and thereafter made no distinction between them. According to D. Scott Rogo, van Eeden’s records document “how the OBE exists in close relationship to lucid dreaming and can be considered a by-product of it”.<sup>4</sup>

Lucid dreams also have some association with NDEs (near-death experiences).<sup>5</sup> A form of lucid dreaming known as *rmi lam* or dream *yoga* has been a part of Tibetan tantric Buddhism for many centuries.

See also: **astral projection, avasthā, near-death experience** (8.3), **out-of-the-body experience, rmi lam** (8.5), **sleep paralysis**.

1. “A Study of Dreams,” Frederik van Eeden, *SDFE* pp.436–37, 441, 446–59.
2. Thomas Browne, *Religio Medici* 2:12, *UCRM* p.121.
3. Summary largely derived from “lucid dreaming,” *Wikipedia*, ret. October 2008; see also d’Hervey de Saint-Denys, *Les Rêves et les moyens de les diriger*, *RMDS*.
4. See D. Scott Rogo, *Leaving the Body*, *LBAP* pp.140–42.
5. See [newscientist.com/blogs/culturelab/2011/01/near-death-neurologist-dreams-on-the-border-of-life.html](http://newscientist.com/blogs/culturelab/2011/01/near-death-neurologist-dreams-on-the-border-of-life.html) ret. November 2014; see also D. Scott Rogo, *Leaving the Body*, *LBAP* p.144ff.

**luminous darkness** See **divine darkness**.

**maghlūb** (A/P) *Lit.* overpowered, overwhelmed, subjugated, conquered, overcome, under the dominion of, enraptured; in Sufism, overcome with rapture, enraptured by God, overwhelmed by a mystical state; also, in such expressions as *maghlūb andar ḥāl-i khvud* (overwhelmed by a mystical state, an ecstatic), and those who are *maghlūb al-qulūb* (under the dominion of their hearts, a mystic), where *al-qulūb* (hearts) refers to the spiritual side of a person.

Rūmī makes a distinction between being enraptured by God and becoming nonexistent. He points out that there is *baqāʾ* (subsistence in God, eternal life) after *fanāʾ* (annihilation of the self in God). Rūmī is relating a dialogue between the Jewish King David and God, in which God has accused David of being responsible for the deaths of many. For on account of the sweetness of David's voice and his "beautiful soul-ravishing song, . . . a multitude gave up the ghost". It is an allusion to the divine music of the creative power, which enables souls to leave the body and go through the process of death while still living, through the guidance of a master (symbolized here as David). David excuses himself:

He (David) said, "I was enraptured (*maghlūb*) by You,  
drunk with You: my hand was tied by Your hand.  
Is not everyone who is enraptured (*maghlūb*) by the king  
the object of His mercy?  
Is he not excused on the grounds that  
"The overpowered (*maghlūb*) is like the nonexistent?"

He (God) said, "The overpowered (*maghlūb*) man  
is a nonexistent one, but only relatively nonexistent.  
Have good faith! Such a nonexistent one, who has abandoned himself,  
is the best of beings, and great among them.  
He has passed away (*fanā*) (from himself)  
in relation to the divine Attributes,  
but in passing away, he has really gained life everlasting (*baqā*).

*Rūmī, Maṣnavī IV:395–99; cf. MJR4 p.294*

Hujwīrī also says that *maghlūb* leads to annihilation (*fanāʾ*) and annihilation leads to seeking the pleasure of God in all things:

Ibrāhīm ibn Shaybān says: "The understanding of annihilation (*fanā*) and subsistence (*baqā*) turns on sincerity (*ikhhlāṣ*) and unity (*waḥdānīyat*) and true servanthip (*ʿubūdīyat*); all else is error and heresy." That is, when anyone acknowledges the unity of God, he feels himself overcome (*maghlūb*) by the omnipotence of God; and one who

is overcome (*maghlūb*) is annihilated by the might of his vanquisher; and when his annihilation (*fanā*) is rightly fulfilled in him (in his meditation), he confesses his weakness and sees no resource except to serve God and try to gain His good pleasure (*riḡā*).

*Hujwīrī, Kashf al-Maḡjūb XIV:8, KMM p.316; cf. KM p.246*

See also: **luṭf** (►4).

**mahaggata-citta** (Pa) *Lit.* developed (*mahaggata*) consciousness (*citta*); evolved, expanded, lofty, sublime, exalted mind or consciousness; in the Pali Buddhist texts, a general term for the exalted states of consciousness experienced in *rūpa-jhāna* (meditative absorption in subtle forms) and *arūpa-jhāna* (meditative absorption in the formless), also known as *rūpa-citta* and *arūpa-citta* or *rūpāvacara-citta* and *arūpāvacara-citta* – *i.e.* consciousness pertaining, respectively, to the realms of subtle form and to the formless realms.

According to the analysis of the *Abhidhamma* texts, there are either eighty-nine or one hundred and twenty-one *cittas* (states of consciousness), depending upon the detail applied to the analysis. These include: *akusala-cittas* (unwholesome states of consciousness) involving greed (*lobha*), hatred or anger (*dosa*), delusion (*moha*) and so on, which are associated with *kāmaloka* (realm of desire); *mahaggata-cittas*, which pertain to *rūpaloka* and *arūpaloka*; and *lokuttara-cittas* (supramundane or transcendental states of consciousness), which experience increasing degrees of *nibbāna*.

The term appears in the *Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta* of the *Dīgha Nikāya*, in which the Buddha lists various states of mind and consciousness (*citta*) that are experienced when practising mindfulness (*satī*) of body and mind, and “contemplating mind as mind (*citta*)” – *i.e.* practising awareness of the mental and emotional content of one’s mind:

And how, monks, does a monk abide contemplating mind as mind? Here, a monk knows a lustful mind (*sarāga-citta*) as lustful, a lust-free mind as free from lust; a hating mind (*sadosa-citta*) as hating, a hatred-free mind as free from hate; a deluded mind (*samoha-citta*) as deluded, an undeluded mind as undeluded; a contracted mind (*sankhitta-citta*) as contracted, a distracted mind (*vikkhitta-citta*) as distracted; a developed mind (*mahaggata-citta*) as developed, an undeveloped mind (*amahaggata-citta*) as undeveloped; a surpassed mind (*sa-uttara-citta*) as surpassed, an unsurpassed mind (*anuttara-citta*) as unsurpassed; a concentrated mind (*samāhita-citta*) as concentrated, an unconcentrated mind (*asamāhita-citta*) as unconcentrated; a liberated mind (*vimutta-citta*) as liberated, an unliberated mind (*avimutta-citta*) as unliberated.

*Dīgha Nikāya 22, Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta, PTS2 p.229; cf. TBLD p.340*



It is from discourses such as these that the *Abhidhamma* texts have evolved their complex metaphysical epistemology regarding multiple *cittas*.

See also: **citta**.

**mahāvideha** (S/H) *Lit.* greatly (*mahā*) without (*vi*) body (*deha*); the supra-corporeal state; a condition of deep meditation in which the meditator experiences himself to be utterly separated from or beyond his body; also the name of one of the seven continents of Jain mythological cosmography, inhabited by human beings – a *karma-bhūmi* (place of *karma*) region where a minimum of four wandering *Tīrthankaras* (enlightened ones) are always available and *moksha* (liberation) is always possible.

In his *Yoga Sūtras*, Patañjali points out that when a person focuses all his attention on something, he can gain complete understanding of the object of concentration. But he says that for this concentration to come about, three faculties must first be aligned: fixation or concentration (*dhāraṇā*), visualization or contemplation (*dhyāna*), and superconscious absorption (*samādhi*). When all these three are brought together, he says, then the state is called *saṁyama*. *Saṁyama* on *mahāvideha* leads to mystical wisdom:

By deep meditation (*saṁyama*)  
on the supra-corporeal state (*mahāvideha*)  
which is beyond the conceivable,  
the ignorance that conceals Reality is destroyed.

*Patañjali, Yoga Sūtras 3:44*

It is said that a liberated *guru* in a state of *mahāvideha* can enter the minds of his disciples and clear their sufferings, negative tendencies, inner obstructions, *karma*, and spiritual ignorance, all of which conceal the disciples' vision of the Divine.

See also: **saṁyama** (7.3), **videha**.

**mahw** (A/P) *Lit.* effacement, obliteration, blotting out; erasure, deletion; elimination, abolition, abolishment, annulment; as in the effacement of writing on a tablet or parchment so that something else may be written there; mystically, self-effacement; extinction or annihilation of the self; absorption in God to the extent that the self ceases to exist, and only God remains:

All of man's character traits and habits, everything that pertains to his individual existence, must become completely naughted and

obliterated (*maḥw*). Then God will give back to him his character traits and everything positive he ever possessed. But at this stage he will know consciously and actually – not just theoretically – and with a true and thorough spiritual realization, that everything he is derives absolutely from God. He is nothing but the ray of God's Attributes manifesting the hidden treasure.

*W.C. Chittick, Sufi Path of Love, SPL p.179*

Bāyazīd said, "Whenever one becomes truly effaced (*maḥw*) in God, everything that exists is God. Once that person has ceased to exist, God simply sees Himself, which is not strange."

*Abū Yazīd al-Bisṭāmī, in Tadhkirat al-Awliyā' 1, TAN1 p.171, in SSE12 p.85*

Wāsiṭī said, "Every particle of one's nature must be effaced (*maḥw*) in a particle of another nature (*i.e.* God), for duality on the path of spirituality is idolatry. . . . It is said that those who speak of effacement (*maḥw*) are committing a crime, for in doing so, they negate those states and affirm their own identity.

*Abū Bakr Wāsiṭī, in Tadhkirat al-Awliyā' 2, TAN2 p.271; cf. in SSE12 p.85*

Thus self-effacement does not mean nonexistence. It is the state in which the mystic, having become utterly selfless, becomes the instrument of divine action. As the *Qur'ān* says, referring to a battle in which it is said that not the Muslims, but God, achieved victory: "When you threw (a handful of dust), it was not your act, but *Allāh's*."<sup>1</sup>

The state of *maḥw*, however, cannot be accurately described; it can only be known through experience. Only on rising above the "fleeting caravanserai" of the physical world can the meaning of "self-extinction (*maḥw*)" be known:

You who have not escaped  
from this fleeting caravanserai (the material world),  
how can you know the meaning of self-extinction (*maḥw*)  
and intoxication (*sukr*) and expansion (*inbisāt*)?

If you do know, it is only hearsay,  
handed down to you from father and grandfather.

*Rūmī, Maṣnavī I:2726–27; cf. MJR2 p.148*

Similarly, he explains that "imagination and understanding and thought" are a part of the "journey" of material existence. But the mystical journey is in the far more fluid medium of the spirit – metaphorically, "the Sea", whose waves are "self-effacement (*maḥw*) and intoxication (*sukr*) and death (*fanā*)":

The journey of the dry body takes place on the dry land:  
the journey of the spirit takes place in the heart of the sea.

Since your life has passed in travelling on land –  
 now mountain, now river, now desert –  
 from where will you obtain the Water of Life (*Āb-i Ḥayvān*)?  
 How will you cleave the waves of the (spiritual) Sea?

The waves of earth are our imagination (*wahm*)  
 and understanding (*fahm*) and thought (*fikr*);  
 The waves of water are self-effacement (*maḥw*)  
 and intoxication (*sukr*) and death (*fanā*).

*Rūmī, Maṣnavī I:572–75; cf. MJR2 pp.33–34*

Ibn al-ʿArabī speaks of the need not to “stop” but to press on through effacement, and to discover the glories that lie beyond:

And if you do not stop with this,  
 He reveals the Mover of the Pen,  
 the Right Hand of the Truth.  
 And if you do not stop with this,  
 you are eradicated, then withdrawn,  
 then effaced, then crushed, then obliterated.  
 When the effects of effacement (*maḥw*)  
 and what follows are terminated,  
 you are affirmed, then made present,  
 then made to remain, then gathered together, then assigned.  
 And the robes of honour which (your state) requires  
 are conferred upon you, and they are many.

*Ibn al-ʿArabī, Journey to the Lord of Power, JLP p.48*

Sufis sometimes speak of various degrees of *maḥw*. Firstly, bad habits are replaced by a spiritual temperament; then, all attributes – good or bad – are effaced; lastly, the self itself is effaced.<sup>2</sup> To this, other Sufis have spoken of *maḥw-i maḥw* (effacement of effacement), in which the self loses all awareness of having effaced the self and of merging into the divine unity.<sup>3</sup> Some have said that there is a yet higher stage, *maḥq* (eradication, destruction), where the effacement is even more complete.<sup>4</sup> Jurjānī explains that *maḥw* is the annihilation of a person’s action in the actions of God, while *maḥq* is the eradication of his being in the divine Essence.<sup>5</sup> Some also speak of *ṭams* (extinction), in which some trace of self remains. True effacement, however, bears little analysis. Sufi poets have summarized it simply:

Effacement (*maḥw*) is where one’s own power  
 is permanently and absolutely lost in the power and Acts of God –  
 In whatever happens, whether good or bad.

*Dāʾī Shirāzī, Kulliyāt 1890, KSDS1 p.115, in FN12 p.265; cf. in SSE12 p.86*

What is effacement (*maḥw*)?

The losing of one's self,

then being deprived of that very losing of self.

*‘Aṭṭār, Muṣibat-Nāmah, MNFA p.41, in SSE12 p.87*

See also: ‘ilm.

1. *Qur’ān* 8:17; cf. AYA.
2. E.g. ‘Izz al-Dīn Maḥmūd Qāshānī, *MHK* p.144, in *SSE12* p.91.
3. E.g. Rūzbihān, *Sharḥ-i Shaṭḥiyāt* 450:1137, *CPS* p.576, in *SSE12* pp.89–90.
4. E.g. Abū Naṣr al-Sarrāj, *Luma’ fī al-Taṣawwuf*, *KLTA* p.355, in *SSE12* p.86; Hujwīrī, *Kashf al-Maḥjūb* XXIV, *KM* p.373; al-Qushayrī, *Risālah*, *RQQQ* p.42, in *SSE12* p.91.
5. Jurjānī, *Ta’rīfāt*, *KTJ* p.187, in *KM* p.373 (n.1).

**manasikāra** (S/Pa), **manaskāra** (S) *Lit.* making (*kāra*) in the mind (*manas*); mind action; intentionally directing the mind to something of either the mind or senses; the application of attention, mental engagement; meditation, reflection, consideration, mental attentiveness or advertence; in the Pali Buddhist *Abhidhamma* (systematic analysis of the Pali *suttas*), a specific term for the mental factor (*cetasika*) or aspect of mind that turns the mind towards something and keeps it persistently focused on that thing.

*Manasikāra* is one of the seven entirely universal (*sabba-sādhāraṇa*) *cetasikas* that are common to all *cittas* (kinds of consciousness). It is a major factor in the *citta* of *āvajjana* (turning the attention towards). In this context, *manasikāra* is like the rudder of a boat, without which the boat has no control over its course and meanders about, completely out of control; or it is like the rider of a galloping horse, without whom the horse becomes directionless. *Manasikāra* is also likened to a charioteer who must pay close attention to his two horses (mind and its object), regarding their rhythm and synchrony. *Manasikāra* is therefore linked to volition (*cetanā*), and consequently to the creation of *karma*, wholesome or unwholesome.

*Manasikāra* has its origins in a more general use of the term found in the Pali *suttas*, in which the Buddha differentiates between appropriate, fitting, careful, systematic, thoughtful or wise attention (*yoniso-manasikāra*) and inappropriate, unfitting, careless, unsystematic, thoughtless, or unwise attention (*ayoniso-manasikāra*).

Attention, reflection or consideration that leads to the elimination of suffering is good and wholesome, and is referred to as appropriate or wise reflection (*yoniso-manasikāra*), since it results in a right view (*sammā-diṭṭhi*). Right view is when the attention is focused on the four noble truths: the existence of suffering (*dukkha*); the origin of suffering, which is craving and clinging

to desires; the cessation of suffering by putting an end to craving; and the path or means to end suffering, which is the eightfold noble path.

*Yoniso-manasikāra* also refers to a thorough and systematic consideration of things, carefully tracing the origins or cause of something. By this means, one comes to see how all things arise and pass away, which leads to deeper understanding of the four noble truths. Through *yoniso-manasikāra*, realization dawns that nothing can bring lasting happiness or satisfaction in a world that is impermanent, where nothing has any definitive and unchanging identity, and where everything bears within it the seeds of disappointment, dissatisfaction, and suffering.

Attention that is applied to speculative or unanswerable questions or to unwholesome thoughts or objects increases the impurities (*āsava*) of the mind, creating bondage to *saṃsāra* (transmigration, the realms of birth and death), and is deemed inappropriate, unwise or careless reflection (*ayoniso-manasikāra*), since it results in wrong views. Such wrong views include belief in a permanent self, belief in complete annihilation after death, denial of the inexorable law of *karma* or cause and effect, as well as the entertaining of unanswerable questions pertaining to the origin of the universe.

*Ayoniso-manasikāra* is also understood as the application of superficial or unsystematic attention to things. By failing to look deeply into the nature of phenomena, material or mental, one is misled into thinking that the seemingly permanent is indeed permanent; that oneself and other things have a definitive and unchanging identity; and that impermanent things are able to bring happiness, when in fact they lead inevitably to mental tension and suffering. As a result, through lack of a systematic application of attention, the mind proliferates concepts and speculations concerning the way things are, none of which have any foundation in Reality.

According to the *Āsāvagga* of the *Anguttara Nikāya*, the Buddha says:

Monks, there are these two conditions for the arising of wrong view (*micchā-diṭṭhi*). Which two? Something said by another (person) and inappropriate attention (*ayoniso-manasikāra*). These are the two conditions for the arising of wrong view.

Monks, there are these two conditions for the arising of right view (*sammā-diṭṭhi*). Which two? Something said by another (person) and appropriate attention (*yoniso-manasikāra*). These are the two conditions for the arising of right view.

*Anguttara Nikāya* 2:125–26, *Āsāvagga*, PTSA1 p.87; cf. ANTB, NDBB p.178

In the *Sabbāsava* ('All the Impurities') *Sutta* of the *Majjhima Nikāya*, the Buddha explains the benefit of wise or appropriate attention (*yoniso-manasikāra*) in order to achieve the goal of destroying all impurities (*āsava*),

and the corresponding danger of unwise or inappropriate attention (*ayoniso-manasikāra*).<sup>1</sup> He begins:

I shall discourse to you on the restraint of the impurities (*āsava*). Listen with attention (*manasikāra*) to what I have to say. The ending of impurities (*āsava*) is for one who knows and sees, not for one who does not know and see. For one who knows what and sees what? Appropriate attention (*yoniso-manasikāra*) and inappropriate attention (*ayoniso-manasikāra*).

*Majjhima Nikāya 2, Sabbāsava Sutta, PTS M1 p.7; cf. MDBB p.91, MNTB*

He then goes on to detail multiple ways in which the arising of impurities should be prevented. Firstly, he takes the case of a worldly minded person who has no regard for the *Dhamma* or those who follow it. As a result, such a person “attends to those things unfit for attention (*ayoniso-manasikāra*) and he does not attend to those things fit for attention (*yoniso-manasikāra*).” Things that are inappropriate or unfit for attention include sensual desires and anything that can lead to spiritual ignorance (*avijjā*), such as confusion concerning the illusory nature of the self and whether or not it is eternal. The Buddha describes the multiple speculative possibilities as “a thicket of views (*diṭṭhi*), a wilderness of views, a contortion of views, a vacillation of views, a fetter of views”. They are, he says, a bondage that results in “birth, aging, death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, despair, and suffering”. The “well-instructed disciple of the noble ones”, on the other hand, who has high regard for the *Dhamma* and those who follow it, knows what is fit for attention and what is not. The Buddha maintains that impurities arise from giving attention to unfit things and do not arise from the converse.

Though the message itself is simple, the logic and the repetitive detail, as in many of the *suttas*, is complex, and the *sutta* continues by depicting at length the various things upon which a monk should reflect wisely or carefully. By wise reflection (*yoniso-manasikāra*), a monk should restrain the five senses and the mind; he should use the monk’s robe, “only for protection from cold, . . . heat, contact with gadflies, mosquitoes, wind, sun, and creeping things, and only for the purpose of covering the parts of the body that cause shame”; similarly, he should use his lodgings only for such protection and for the “enjoyment of seclusion”. Where such things cannot be avoided, he should endure them, together with harsh words and bodily pains. By reflecting wisely in this manner, says the Buddha, impurities will not arise. Other things to be avoided after careful reflection include:

a wild elephant, a wild horse, a wild bull, a wild dog, a snake, a stump, a bramble patch, a chasm, a cliff, a cesspool, an open sewer. Reflecting wisely (*yoniso-manasikāra*), he should avoid sitting on unsuitable

seats, wandering into unsuitable places, and associating with bad friends that would make his wise friends in the holy life suspect him of evil conduct. While impurities (*āsava*), vexation, and fever might arise in him if he does not avoid these things, no impurities (*āsava*), vexation or fever will arise in him if he avoids them.

*Majjhima Nikāya 2, Sabbāsava Sutta, PTSM1 pp.10–11; cf. MDBB p.95, MNTB*

The Buddha teaches that, by living in this manner, impurities will not arise. These, however, are all outer things. Perhaps more to the point is the Buddha's advice that, by wise reflection (*yoniso-manasikāra*), a monk should not tolerate negative thoughts when they arise. Such thoughts include thoughts of sensual desire (*kāma*), ill will (*vyāpāda*), cruelty (*vihiṃsā*), and evil unwholesome qualities (*pāpaka akusala-dhamma*). At the same time, he should, after wise reflection, develop such attributes as mindfulness (*sati*), persistence (*virīya*), rapture (*pīti*), serenity (*passaddhi*), concentration (*samādhi*), and equanimity (*upekkhā*).

A story is related in the *Ayoniso Sutta* of the *Samyutta Nikāya* concerning a wayward monk who is pulled up short by a forest goddess for letting his mind wander into bad thoughts:

A certain *bhikkhu* was once dwelling among the Kosalans in a certain woodland thicket. On one occasion, when that *bhikkhu* had gone there to pass the day, he kept on thinking evil unwholesome thoughts (*pāpaka akusala-vitakka*), that is, thoughts of sensuality (*kāma*), ill will (*vyāpāda*), and cruelty (*vihiṃsā*). At this, the *devatā* (goddess) who inhabited that woodland thicket, having compassion for that *bhikkhu* and desiring his good, desiring to bring him to his senses, approached him and addressed him with this verse:

“Because of careless attention (*ayoniso-manasikāra*),  
you are being chewed up by your thoughts.  
Having relinquished the careless (*ayoniso*) way,  
you should contemplate with care (*yoniso*).

“Keeping your mind on the teacher,  
on the *Dhamma*, the *sangha*, and your own virtues (*sīla*),  
you will surely arrive at joy (*pāmojja*)  
and rapture (*pīti*), and bliss (*sukha*) as well.  
Then when you are suffused with joy (*pāmojja*),  
you will put an end to suffering (*dukkha*).”

Then that *bhikkhu*, chastened by that *devatā*, came to his senses.

*Anguttara Nikāya 9:11, Ayoniso Sutta, PTSS1 p.203; cf. CDBB p.301*

*Manasikāra* is also used in various other contexts. It can refer to thoughts, or more specifically to bad or wrong thoughts (*mithyā-manasikāra*); it can mean deep reflection (*gambhīra-manasikāra*) upon something; and it is used for meditation, either on its own or in compound terms such as *satata-manasikāra* (ceaseless meditation), *dhātu-manasikāra* (meditation on the elements), and *sīvathikā-manasikāra* (charnel-ground meditation, meditation on the nine repulsive stages in the decomposition of a corpse).

See also: **cetasika**, **citta**, **dhātu-vavatthāna** (8.5), **sīvathikā-manasikāra** (8.5).

1. *Majjhima Nikāya* 2, *Sabbāsava Sutta*, *PTSM1* pp.6–12; cf. *MDBB* pp.91–96, *MNTB*.

**manojalpa** (S), **yid la brjod pa** (T), **yìyán** (C), **igon** (J) *Lit.* mind (*manas*, *yid*) talk (*jalpa*, *brjod*); words (*yán*) and thought (*yì*); mental chatter; the constant, uncontrolled and barely conscious murmur of thoughts regarding the world that goes on continuously in the waking state; often used synonymously with *vikalpa* (uncertainty, indecision, doubt, vacillation, hesitation, fancy, imagination) and *prapañcha* (mental proliferation); in the *Yogācāra* school of Buddhism, the illusory fabrication of thoughts regarding something, as opposed to an undistorted perception or consciousness of the thing as it is in itself; more specifically, the mental process that gives rise to verbal expression.

See also: **prapañcha**, **vikalpa**.

**manzil** (A/P) (pl. *manāzil*) *Lit.* house, home, abode, place; waystation, stage, destination; mystically, a series of stages or stations on the spiritual journey to God, each waystation representing a stage of moral and spiritual discipline or attainment in which the individual must become firmly established before further ascent. Emphasis is laid on making the attainment of each successive stage a permanent spiritual condition; generally used synonymously with *maqām* (stages, pl. *maqāmāt*).

Sufis have categorized these *manāzil* or *maqāmāt* in various ways, often copying from each other, with or without modification. Some have said that there are three stations: *sharīah* (religious observances), *ṭarīqah* (the spiritual path), and *maʿrifah* (gnosis, experience of mystical realities).

Some have listed seven: *ʿubūdīyah* (service), *ʿishq* (love), *zuhd* (detachment), *maʿrifah* (gnosis), *wajd* (ecstasy), *Ḥaqīqah* (Reality), and *waṣl* (union).<sup>1</sup>

Others have included *tawbah* (repentance), *waraʿ* (watchfulness, self-control, abstinence), *ṭalab* (seeking), *dhikr* (remembrance), *ṣabr* (patience), *tawakkul* (trust in God), *uns* (intimacy), *ulfah* (familiarity with God),



*maḥabbah* (lovingkindness), *wujūd* (being), and many more. Most agree that all stations lead to *fanā*' (annihilation).

One of the most well-known exposition of the stages is found in Anṣārī's *Manāzil al-Sā'rīn* ('Stations of the Wayfarers'), in which he categorizes one hundred *manāzil*, divided into ten categories, which are traversed by the seeker on the way to God.

Shabistarī observes that the apparent differences are present because each person writes from the stage that he himself has reached. Moreover, everyone tends to use language in a unique and personal manner:

As for the saints on this path, of the past and yet to come,  
each give news of his own stages (*manāzil*). . .

For the language of each reflects his level of evolution,  
though people find them hard to understand.

*Shabistarī, Gulshan-i Rāz 23, 30, GRS p.29; cf. GRSS (24, 32) p.3*

Virtues such as patience or trust in God are included among the *maqāmāt* because Sufis regard such virtues as modes of inner being rather than external characteristics. They also emphasize that the goal is to reach the station of annihilation in God, who dwells beyond all states and virtues.

Ḥāfiẓ indicates that the one who really knows about all the various stages of the spiritual path, especially as they relate to each individual disciple, is the spiritual master:

Dye your prayer mat in wine  
if the master of the magi (*pīr-i mughān*) commands,  
for he is not unaware of the rules and stations (*manzil ḥā*) of the Way.

*Ḥāfiẓ, Dīvān, DHA p.1, DIH p.29; cf. DHWC (1:3) p.2*

See also: **maqām**, **wādī**.

1. Abū Sa'īd al-Kharrāz, in Anṣārī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfīyah*.

**maqām** (A/P) (pl. *maqāmāt*) *Lit.* station, rank, position, standing, standpoint; a position of rank or dignity; in Sufism, *maqāmāt* (stations) generally denote ascending stages attained by the traveller on the mystic path. Each station represents a stage of moral and spiritual discipline in which the individual must become firmly established before further ascent. Emphasis is laid on making the attainment of each successive stage a permanent spiritual condition. The term *manzil* (dwellings, stations, stages; pl. *manāzil*) is sometimes used as an equivalent.

Once an individual has reached a particular *maqām*, he can reach that *maqām* at will:

In *ṣūfī* terms, *maqām* is that level which is gained through bearing the pain and difficulties related to its achievement. Once attained, the status is said to be possessed or occupied. The wayfarer's dwelling is his *maqām*.

*Jurjānī, Ta'rifāt, KTJ p.203*

Given their propensity for systematization, it is not surprising to find that Sufi writers differ in their classification of the various stations. Shabistarī, using the term *manāzil*, observes that this is because each one has written from the stage that he himself has reached.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, everyone tends to use language in a unique and personal manner. Repentance, trust in God and poverty, however, are emphasized by all. In one of the earliest Sufi treatises, *Kitāb al-Luma' fī al-Taṣawwuf* ('Book of Light on Sufism'), Abū Naṣr al-Sarrāj (d.988 CE) lists seven stages (*maqāmāt*), each – except the first – being the result of the one before.<sup>2</sup> They are: conversion or repentance (*tawbah*), watchfulness, self-control or abstinence (*wara'*), detachment (*zuhd*), spiritual poverty (*faqr*), patience (*ṣabr*), trust or self-surrender (*tawakkul*), and contentment (*riḍā*).

ʿAṭṭār, in his allegorical *Conference of the Birds*, speaks of the *maqāmāt* or *manāzil* as valleys (*vādī*), providing a list that differs from that of al-Sarrāj.<sup>3</sup>

Virtues such as patience or trust in God are included among the *maqāmāt* because Sufis regard such virtues as modes of inner being rather than external characteristics. They also emphasize that the goal is to reach the station of annihilation in God, who dwells beyond all states and virtues.

Without being definitive, Hujwīrī also indicates that there are several such stations:

Station (*maqām*) denotes a person's status on the path to God, and his fulfilment of the obligations appertaining to that station (*maqām*), and his keeping it until he comprehends its perfection so far as lies in a man's power. It is not permissible that he should quit his station (*maqām*) without fulfilling the obligations thereof. Thus, the first station (*maqām*) is repentance (*tawbat*), then comes conversion (*inābat*), then renunciation (*zuhd*), then trust in God (*tawakkul*), and so on. It is not permissible that anyone should pretend to conversion without repentance, or to renunciation without conversion, or to trust in God without renunciation.

*Hujwīrī, Kashf al-Maḥjūb XIV, KMM pp.224–25; cf. KM p.181*

According to Farīd Aḥmad Ṣamdī, there are one hundred *maqāmāt* (stations),<sup>4</sup> of which ninety-nine – corresponding to the ninety-nine names of *Allāh* – comprise the ascending stations (*talwīn*) of the inner Way. As the wayfarer is established at one station, without fear of falling, he ascends to the one above, until he reaches the ninety-ninth. The hundredth stage is that of *tamkīn* (stability, establishment), where the soul merges with the Essence.

*Talwīn* and *tamkīn* are a commonly encountered pair of Sufi technical terms. *Talwīn* (change) refers to the transition from one state to another, as the soul ascends to the ultimate station of spiritual perfection, denoted by *tamkīn*. This is also called *maqām-i faqr* (station of poverty or humility) and *maqām-i ghanī* (station of wealth), both meant in a spiritual sense. It is the timeless and spaceless region of union with the One, where the soul stays forever, rapt in perpetual wonder. Hujwīrī explains the difference between *maqām* and *tamkīn*, the final resting place:

*Maqām* (station) points to the perseverance of the seeker in fulfilling his obligation towards the object of his search with strenuous exertion and flawless intention. Everyone who desires God has a station (*maqām*), which, in the beginning of his search, is a means whereby he seeks God. Although the seeker derives some benefit from every station through which he passes, he finally rests in one, because a station and the quest thereof involve contrivance and design (*tarkīb-u ḥīlah*), not conduct and practice (*ravish-u mu‘āmalat*).

God has said: “Each of us has a certain station.”<sup>5</sup> The station of Adam was repentance (*tawbat*), that of Noah was renunciation (*zuhd*), that of Abraham was resignation (*taslīm*), that of Moses was contrition (*inābat*), that of David was bittersweet sorrow (*ḥuzn*), that of Jesus was hope (*rajā*), that of John (the Baptist) was fear of God (*khawf*), and that of our Apostle was praise (*ẓikr*)...

*Tamkīn* denotes the residence of spiritual adepts in the abode of perfection and in the highest grade. Those in stations can pass on from their stations, but it is impossible to pass beyond the grade of *tamkīn*, because *maqām* is the grade of the beginners, whereas *tamkīn* is the resting place of adepts; and *maqāmāt* (stations) are stages on the way, whereas *tamkīn* is repose within the shrine. The friends of God are absent (from themselves) on the way and are strangers (to themselves) in the stages: their hearts are in the presence (of God), and in that presence every instrument is evil and every tool is (a token of) absence (from God) and infirmity...

When Moses attained to *tamkīn*, God bade him to put off his shoes and cast away his staff,<sup>6</sup> these being articles of travel, and Moses being in the presence of God. The beginning of love is search, but the end is rest: water flows in the river bed, but when it reaches the ocean it ceases to flow and changes its taste, so that those who desire water avoid it. But those who desire pearls devote themselves to death and fasten the plummet of search to their feet and plunge headlong into the sea that they may either gain the hidden pearl or lose their dear lives.

Hujwīrī, *Kashf al-Mahjūb* XXIV, KMM pp.484–86; cf. KM pp.370–72

A particular *maqām*, attained through spiritual effort and discipline, is generally said to have been ‘earned’, and is therefore permanent. Sufis commonly distinguish a *maqām* from *ḥāl*, a state, defined as a gift from God that comes and goes. Rūmī observes:

There are many among the *ṣūfīs* who enjoy *ḥāl*:  
but he who has attained to *maqām* is rare.

*Rūmī, Maṣnavī I:1438; cf. MJR2 p.79*

Rūmī goes on to speak of the journey of the soul from its original oneness with God before the beginning of the creation when it resided in the *maqām-i quds* (station of holiness), descending through the successive layers of creation, and of the journey of return that the soul now undertakes, back up through the successive stages (*manāzil*) to that original oneness. According to the story, ‘Umar (who symbolizes the master) is talking to the “ambassador of Rūm” who had come a long way to meet him. The *Šīmurgh* is a legendary bird:

He (‘Umar) reminded him of the stages (*manāzil ḥā*)  
traversed by the soul,  
and he reminded him of the journeys of the spirit,  
and of the time which has ever been void of time,  
and of the station of holiness (*maqām-i quds*),  
which has ever been majestic,  
and of the atmosphere wherein the *Šīmurgh* of the spirit,  
before this (life), has flown and experienced grace,  
every single flight thereof being greater  
than the horizons of this world  
and greater than the hope and greed of the longing lover.

*Rūmī, Maṣnavī I:1439–42, MJR2 p.79*

See also: **ḥāl**, **lā-maqām** (2.1), **manzil**.

1. Shabistarī, *Gulshan-i Rāz* 24, 32, *GRS* pp.29–30; cf. *GRSS* p.3.
2. Abū Naṣr al-Sarrāj, *Luma‘ fī al-Taṣawwuf*, *KLTA* pp.43–51, *KLT* pp.12–16, in *MOI* pp.28–29.
3. E.g. ‘Aṭṭār, *Conference of the Birds* 3226–33, *MTAN* p.380, *CBD* p.166.
4. Farīd Aḥmad Ṣamdī, *Iṣṭilāḥāt-i Ṣūfīyah*, *IS* p.127.
5. *Qur’ān* 37:164.
6. *Qur’ān* 20:12ff.

**maqām al-sam‘** (A), **maqām-i sam‘** (P) *Lit.* station (*maqām*) of hearing (*al-sam‘*); station of listening; the stage or station in which the divine Word can be heard at all times:

Whenever God encompasses the mystic's (inner) hearing (*samʿ*) with the light of His own music (*samʿ*), the mystic listens to the divine Word (*Kalām*), (ringing) throughout all the spiritual stations; and by God's own music (*samʿ*), he hears all the sounds of being....

Al-ʿĀrif (the gnostic, al-Ḥallāj) said: "The station of hearing (*maqām al-samʿ*) follows after the vision of the innermost consciousness (*shuhūd al-sirr*)."

*Rūzbiḥān, Mashrab al-Arwāḥ 12:30, MARB p.226; cf. in SSE1 p.98*

See also: **samāʿ** (8.4).

**maʿrifah** (A), **maʿrifat** (P) *Lit.* knowledge, knowing; specifically, divine knowing or knowledge of God (*maʿrifah Allāh*); direct inner knowledge of higher realities; gnosis; from the same root as *ʿarafa* (to know, to recognize, to perceive, to be cognizant of, to be aware of, to be acquainted with) and *ʿirfān* (gnosis, knowledge of God); not used in the *Qurʾān*, which uses *ʿilm* for God's knowledge – a term usually applied to book learning or the knowledge of this world, but sometimes used to mean gnosis; part of a Sufi triad that includes *maḥabbah* (love) and *makhāfah* (fear) as essential aspects of the path to God.

As the seeker travels the inner path, the degree of *maʿrifah* deepens. First, there is inspiration (*ilhām*), then unveiling (*kashf* or *mukāshafah*), then contemplative vision (*shuhūd* or *mushāhadah*).

*Maʿrifah* is inner experiential knowledge at any stage on the inner ascent, it does not necessarily imply complete knowledge of all the divine mysteries. Sufis also speak of the three stages of *maʿrifah al-ʿaqlīyah* (reasoning and intellectual knowledge), *maʿrifah al-ʿilmīyah* (knowledge of knowledge), and *maʿrifah al-kāshifah* (unveiled gnosis). In some more technical usages, *maʿrifah* is associated particularly with direct perception at the level of the *ʿālam al-jabarūt* (realm of power), one of the inner worlds.

According to Sufis, there is only one kind of real knowledge: direct, personal mystic experience (*maʿrifah*), culminating in union with or absorption in the highest Truth or Reality (*Ḥaqīqah*). Such higher knowledge cannot be attained through intellect or reasoning and is fundamentally different from rationally acquired knowledge:

The heart (*dil*) that knows light  
and purity through gnosis (*maʿrifat*),  
sees God first in all that it beholds.

*Shabistarī, Gulshan-i Rāz 84, GRS p.37, in SSE9 p.140*

Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm ibn Dāʿūd al-Qaṣṣār al-Ruqqī said, "Gnosis is proof (*iṣbāt*) of God, shorn of illusory notions. In other words, knowing God

beyond the illusory (*wahm*) perspective of created being and far from intellectual perception.”

*Anṣārī, Majmū'ah-i Rasā'il, RAAA1 p.94; cf. in SSE9 p.140*

In the early stages, gnosis (*ma'rifah*) involves the knowing of God in terms of His Attributes and His qualities, while in the final stages, it means comprehending the very essence of Reality.

*Shāh Nī'mat Allāh Valī, Rasā'il, RNV4 p.182, in SSE9 p.141*

*Ma'rifah* is the third of four stages that comprise the spiritual path described by Sufis:

1. *Sharī'ah*. The external rules and rituals of Islam; Muslim religious law.
2. *Ṭarīqah*. The spiritual path *per se*; the code of conduct for spiritual development.
3. *Ma'rifah*. Vision and knowledge of realms above the physical, leading to a state of nearness to God and surrender to the divine will.
4. *Ḥaqīqah*. Merging into the Truth and attaining full divine union.

*Ma'rifah* is experienced in the innermost core of one's being:

Dhū al-Nūn the Egyptian says: “Gnosis (*ma'rifah*) is in reality God's providential communication of the spiritual light (*nūr*) to our inmost hearts (*asrār*).

*Hujwīrī, Kashf al-Maḥjūb XV, KMM p.352, KM p.275*

The attainment of *ma'rifah* is inextricably associated with *fanā'* (annihilation of self):

Abū Yazīd al-Biṣṭāmī, on being questioned concerning gnosis (*ma'rifah*), quoted the *Qur'ān*, “Lo, kings, when they enter a city, ruin it and abase the mighty men among its people,”<sup>1</sup> meaning that when gnosis (*ma'rifah*) enters the heart it consumes and casts out everything else.

*Abū Yazīd al-Biṣṭāmī, in Luma' fī al-Taṣawwuf, KLTA p.92; cf. in MJR7 p.304*

*Ma'rifah* implies personal experience of the beauty and joy of the inner realities, upon which all attachment to material things becomes insipid and fades away:

None refrains from the lusts of this world save him in whose heart there is a light that keeps him always busied with the next world.

It may be that while the mystic sleeps in his bed, God will reveal to him the mystery and will make luminous that which He will never reveal to one standing in prayer. When the gnostic's spiritual eye is opened, this bodily eye is shut: they see nothing but Him.

If gnosis (*maʿrifah*) were to take visible form, all that looked thereon would die at the sight of its beauty and loveliness and goodness and grace, and every brightness would become dark beside the splendour thereof. Gnosis (*maʿrifah*) is nearer to silence than speech.

When the heart (mind) weeps because it has lost, the spirit laughs because it has found.

*Abū Sulaymān al-Dārānī; cf. in ODS p.308*

Many Sufis have extolled the virtues of *maʿrifah*:

Gnosis (*maʿrifat*) is a world without end,  
an ocean that is boundless, infinite.

*Sanāʿī, Maṣnavī ḥā, MSMR p.90; cf. in SSE9 p.140*

When Abū Saʿīd al-Kharrāz was asked about gnosis (*maʿrifah*), he explained, “Gnosis (*maʿrifah*) comes through two factors: (1) God’s own generosity, and (2) the utmost expenditure of effort on the part of the devotee.”

*Abū Naṣr al-Sarrāj, Lumaʿ fī al-Taṣawwuf, KLTA p.35, in SSE9 p.142*

See also: ‘**ārīf** (7.1), **gnōsis**, ‘**ilm**, ‘**ilm al-maʿrifah**, ‘**irfān**, **jñāna**.

1. *Qurʾān* 27:34.

**mast** (H/Pu) *Lit.* intoxicated, inebriated, enraptured, wholly absorbed in, ecstatic (in absorption); absorbed to the point of losing all awareness of oneself or anything else, free of care; esoterically, so absorbed in spiritual practice as to disregard the body, the senses, all outer phenomena.

Speaking of the experience of the inner sweetness of the divine Word, Guru Nānak says:

Those who drink it in are enraptured (*mast*):  
their bonds and shackles are cut away.  
When one’s light blends into the divine light,  
then the desire for *māyā* (*māiā*, illusion) is ended.

*Guru Nānak, Ādi Granth 351, AGK*

The condition of inebriation or intoxication is known as *mastī*, and an individual in this condition is known as a *mastānā*, referring more specifically to one who is spiritually intoxicated.

See also: **mastānah** (7.1), **mastī**.

**mastī** (P/Pu) *Lit.* drunkenness, intoxication; in Sufism, the ecstasy, spiritual rapture and intoxication of divine love; part of a family of metaphors that use the language of alcoholic drunkenness in speaking of spiritual intoxication:

This term (*mastī*) is intended to convey the bewilderment and infatuation experienced by a wayfarer endowed with visionary consciousness, during contemplation of the Beloved's beauty.

*Tahānawī, Kashshāf Iṣṭilāḥāt al-Funūn, KIFT4 p.459, in SSE1 p.210*

The modern scholar W.C. Chittick explains the metaphor:

People drink wine because it brings intoxication (*mastī, sukr*). Sobriety (*hushyārī, ṣaḥw*), from which the Sufi desires to escape, is self-existence with all its concomitants. Intoxication is the obliteration of self-awareness and of the thoughts and motives connected to the ego; ultimately it is annihilation in God.

*W.C. Chittick, Sufī Path of Love, SPL p.318*

Anṣārī likewise indicates that the “drunkard” is one who has become completely intoxicated and lost in the divine Beloved:

If they ask what sort of thing is drunkenness (*mastī*), we reply that it is the elimination of discrimination, and the inability to distinguish being from nonbeing, head from foot. The drunkard is not someone unable to discern good from evil. He is one who does not distinguish himself from the Friend, nor the Friend from himself.

*Anṣārī, Majmū'ah-ī Rasā'il, RAAA1 p.360, in SSE1 p.210*

Ḥāfiẓ indicates that the seeming sobriety of reason is useless for piloting the soul out of the stormy waters of this world. To reach the harbour of peace, the intellect must give place to spiritual intoxication:

Unless the intellect drops its anchor  
in the harbour of intoxication (*mastī*),  
how can we pilot our ship  
out of this tempest of dread?

*Ḥāfiẓ, Dīvān, DIH p.114, DHA p.51; cf. DHWC (201:2) p.376, in SSE1 p.209*

He points out that this is a mystery that the self-righteous cannot understand:

Do not discuss the mystery and secret of intoxication (*mastī*)  
with puritans veiled in piety.



Do not ask a picture on the wall  
about the lore of the soul!

*Ḥāfiẓ, Dīvān, DHA p.125, DIH p.222, DHM (271:10) p.266;*

*cf. DHWC (282:11) p.497, in SSEI p.210*

See also: **kharābah** (7.2), **khum-khānah** (7.2), **may-kadah** (7.2), **may-khānah** (7.2), **ṣaḥw**, **sharāb-khānah** (7.2), **sukr**.

**mati-jñāna** (S) *Lit.* sense (*mati*) knowledge (*jñāna*); knowledge acquired through the senses and the activity of the mind (*manas*); a form of knowledge available to all creatures; limited to knowledge of material things; one of the five or sometimes eight kinds of *jñāna* according to Jain epistemology; also called *ābhinibodhika-jñāna* (knowledge derived from perception). *Mati* has a wide spread of meaning, including mind, sense, perception, understanding, and intelligence.

All knowledge acquired through the five physical senses, all memory and all knowledge inferred or acquired through reason and analysis is categorized as *mati-jñāna*. Jain philosophers have identified four stages in the acquisition of such knowledge. First there is sensory stimulation and the perception of something (*avagraha*); this then stimulates the mind, in which arises the desire to know more about the thing perceived, a mental process that involves some very basic thought, speculation and comparison with previous experience stored in memory, especially if the sensation is something unfamiliar (*īhā*); this culminates in recognition of the original stimulus and a decision or judgment as to what it is (*avāya*); lastly, the experience is then retained in memory (*dhāraṇā*).

This sequence can be summarized as sensory stimulus, apprehension, consideration, decision and retention in memory, and these are all considered a part of *mati-jñāna*. This process is continuously going on during the normal waking state and happens automatically, without conscious effort, especially when the initial stimuli and their circumstances are mostly familiar. The mind is thus automatically stimulated by the senses. *Mati-jñāna* is present in all creatures, since its processes are largely instinctive and proceed without conscious direction, even in human beings.

Knowledge acquired through words, symbols, logic and reasoning are a part of the second form of knowledge, *shruta-jñāna* (heard knowledge). *Shruta-jñāna* covers the more conscious mental processes that take place after the processing of sensory stimuli. Most human beings function only within the sphere of these first two forms of knowledge, the remaining three relate to extrasensory knowledge (*avadhi-jñāna* and *manah-paryāya-jñāna*) and omniscient mystical awareness (*kevala-jñāna*) or gnosis.

In the attempt to understand the functioning and inner constitution of human beings and other creatures, philosophers have analysed and subdivided

the various forms of knowledge and perception, with many variations on the same basic themes. Some Jain logicians of the past have calculated that there are twelve varieties of twenty-eight kinds of *mati-jñāna*, making in all three hundred and thirty-six categories of *mati-jñāna*.<sup>1</sup> But how can a mind understand itself by intellectual analysis, without even knowing its own nature or the manner by which it functions? Mystics point to the highest kind of direct experiential knowledge or gnosis as the best means of true understanding.

See also: **jñāna**.

1. See e.g. T.C. Kalghati, *Jaina View of Life*, JVLK p.81.

**meditation experiences** Meditation experiences are a personal treasure and are usually kept secret. The following letters from initiates, however, were recorded in a diary by Rai Sahib Munshi Ram, secretary to Maharaj Sawan Singh, and later translated into English and published as *With the Three Masters*:

In *bhajan* (meditation) I made some progress. I think I had told you that I had penetrated the astral regions and had met your radiant form. From there after going through many beautiful places I found the bell sound deepening into vast peals of bells and my vision growing clearer and brighter. I beheld such a brilliance as I could never have thought possible with this earthly mind. The inhabitants were luminous and bright, and the dwellings of a design and grace that this earth will never know. I met and conversed with the lord of that region. It was scarcely conversation as we know it; words being almost unnecessary, a great deal by facial expression and gesture and a certain amount by pure perception; from there I went into the region of sunrise and the sound deepened into a very deep resounding vibration. It required much concentration to pass through this stage. My artistic tendencies had to be purified. I am very fond of drawing and painting, and the colours and forms and views were of a surpassing loveliness which held me down a long time.

*Letter from Simla, November 12th 1944, in WTM2 pp.8-9*

“I received your letter of 9th January. The day you wrote that letter my spiritual progress, which was stopped, opened again. . . . During the day, due to the noise in the factory, I cannot hear the *Shabd*, but the *simran* continues all the time. In the evening I sit for *bhajan* after meals at six thirty and through your grace I immediately catch the Sound. Sometimes I am so lost in this sweetness of meditation that the morning siren of the factory blows while I am still sitting. Sometimes I lie in bed and for ten to fifteen minutes listen intently to the *Shabd*.

The soul at once goes out and for about three hours it either enjoys the pleasures of some beautiful garden or visits some palaces within. The like of these gardens and palaces are not to be seen in this world. I feel as if I am not in this world and all the time I continue thinking of the *Shabd* and your good self. . . .”

Huzur Maharaj Ji (Maharaj Sawan Singh) wrote in reply: “Try to manifest the form of the *satguru* and go forward in his company. Wherever there is any obstruction, he will help you. Give up the idea of enjoying the sights of these places and try to go up, attaching yourself to the *Shabd*.”

*Letter from Tatanagar, January 30th 1945, in WTM2 pp.31–32*

Your commands were received and I have been following all instructions faithfully without thinking of time. The whole day either *simran* or *dhyān* remains with me. When I sit in meditation at night, after catching the *Shabd* I remain conscious of this world only for a very short time. When the sweetest of sounds starts ringing the soul leaves this body and I find myself wandering in the upper worlds. At several places rain falls on the soul and it also drinks water. The sun shines. In the beginning it was red, bathing everything in its red lustre, but now its colour is white. There is a beautiful garden and although the sun shines there is absolutely no heat.

You come and go; sometimes you talk to me and sometimes you say that you have no time. Sometimes I see you going by and the rising dust comes towards me. My soul strives to get a glimpse of you, but you are not visible. In the beginning, I used to see many different sights, but since you wrote that these sights should not be seen, they have disappeared.

Catching the *Shabd*, first there is the sound of the gong and the conch, then like the thunder of clouds or the beating of a drum; but after these there is a very attractive sound resembling the notes of a *sārangī* (a stringed instrument), but much sweeter. Since your letter arrived, bridges, rivers, oceans, beautiful gardens, mountains, valleys and palaces are seen no more. I felt that the soul was going with great speed in some direction, but it was all dark and it was searching for light. Now for the last five or six days I have been seeing beautiful flowers, green fields, and strange types of trees bearing unusual fruits. I cannot compare them with anything. Further on, they are still more beautiful.

*Letter, March 17th 1945, in WTM2 pp.41–42*

**mí** (C) *Lit.* an enigma, a puzzle, a riddle, a mystery; bewilderment, perplexity, confusion. See **huò**.

**mīmāṃsā** (S/H) *Lit.* profound thought and serious deliberation with a view to ascertaining the Truth; reflection, consideration, investigation, enquiry, examination, discussion; a term particularly used in regard to the study of Vedic texts; one of the six systems of Hindu philosophy. That a school of philosophy should be called *Mīmāṃsā* indicates that religious texts are to be considered or studied, rather than taken literally.

See also: **Pūrva Mīmāṃsā** (1.11).

**mindfulness** In a general spiritual context, attentiveness, watchfulness, alertness, vigilance; present awareness of what one is thinking and doing; focused attention of the mind during prayer; more specifically, constant awareness of one's own essential being; constant awareness of the being of God, *i.e.* mindfulness of God, true remembrance of God; also, mindfulness of death, *i.e.* awareness that death is never far away. Ilias the Presbyter quotes from the Bible in praise of both:

There is nothing more fearful than the thought of death, or more wonderful than mindfulness of God. For the first induces the grief that leads us to salvation, and the second bestows gladness. "I remembered God," says the prophet, "and I rejoiced."<sup>1</sup> And Sirach says: "Be mindful of your death, and you will not sin."<sup>2</sup> You cannot possess the remembrance of God until you have experienced the astringency of the thought of death.

*Ilias the Presbyter, Gnostic Anthology 3:12, Philokalia; cf. PCT3 p.48*

St Symeon (the New Theologian) says that remembrance of death helps to remove "material concerns" from the mind:

Worldly thoughts and material concerns blind the mind, or eye of the soul, like a cloth that covers the physical eyes: so long as we are not free of them, we cannot see. But once they are removed by mindfulness of death, then we clearly see the true light, that which illumines everyone who attains the spiritual world.

*St Symeon, Practical Texts 23, Philokalia, PCT4 p.29*

Mindfulness of God is the result of interior prayer. In the Orthodox tradition, this generally means the Jesus prayer, which leads, says Theoliptos (c. 1250–1322), Metropolitan of Philadelphia (a city of ancient Asia Minor), to an illumined and entirely non-intellectual kind of knowledge:

Sitting in your cell, then, be mindful of God, raising your soul (*nous*) above all things, and prostrating it wordlessly before Him, exposing your heart's state to Him, and cleaving to Him in love. For mindfulness of

God is the contemplation of God, who draws to Himself the soul's (*nous*) vision and aspiration, and illumines the soul (*nous*) with His own light. When the soul (*nous*) turns toward God and stills all representational images of created things, it perceives in an imageless way, and through an ignorance surpassing all knowledge, its vision illumined by God's unapproachable glory.... Such are the characteristics of true mindfulness of God.... Concentrated mindfulness of God is followed by love and joy....

If you pray in the mind in this way, you will be granted the privilege of attaining mindfulness of God and will penetrate the innermost sanctuary of the soul (*nous*), mystically contemplating the Invisible, and alone celebrating in solitude God alone in the unity of divine knowledge and in outpourings of love.

*Theoliptos, On Inner Work, Philokalia; cf. PCT4 pp.181, 184*

Mindfulness of God is not confined to any particular spiritual tradition. As an unknown Jewish psalmist from pre-Christian times prays:

Remove not Thy mercy from me, O God,  
nor mindfulness of Thee from my heart until death. . . .  
Direct the works of my hands before Thee,  
and preserve my footsteps in the mindfulness of Thee.

*Psalms of Solomon 16:6, 9, AOT p.675*

See also: **apramāda, attentiveness, presence of God, vigilance, watchfulness.**

1. *Psalms* 77:3, LXX.
2. *Wisdom of Jesus ben Sirach* 7:36.

**mìng** (C) *Lit.* life, existence; fate, destiny; order, command, mandate; to name, to call, to hail; true spiritual life, spiritual potential; commonly found in Daoist texts in the expression *xìngmìng*, which refers to one's true, real, innate or original nature (*xìng*) and one's true spiritual life (*mìng*).

Like many Daoist terms, the term is used in the *Dàodé jīng*:

Attain the Great Void (*xūjí*),  
remain single-mindedly centred and still (*jìng*).  
The myriad things form and act,  
but I observe them return to their Source –  
Like plants that grow luxuriantly,  
but return (die back) to the root from which they sprang.

To return to the Root is stillness (*jìng*) –  
it is called returning to one's (true spiritual) life (*mìng*).

Returning to one's (true spiritual) life  
 is to find the eternal (*cháng*).  
 To know the eternal is enlightenment (*míng*).  
*Dàodé jīng* 16

To rediscover one's innate spiritual life, master Lǐ Dàochún (C13th) recommends developing complete stillness of mind in meditation and an attitude of *wúwéi* (non-action, unforced and selfless action) regarding life in the world:

Still the mind until it shows no trace,  
 even while the body is moving about (in the world).  
 Forget contrivance in dealing with the world:  
 when things change, let them be.  
 In any situation or encounter,  
 always yield.  
 Then the foundation of your (true spiritual) life (*mìng*)  
 will be eternally firm,  
 and your original nature (*yuánxìng*) will be whole and luminous.  
*Lǐ Dàochún, "Yǒng sìyuán jīngshì," Zhōnghé jí, DZ249*

This being so, the *Zhuāngzǐ* counsels the adoption of a spiritual approach to life, so that one's potentially wayward human nature does not veil one's true spiritual nature:

Therefore, it has been said: "Do not let the human obliterate the heavenly; do not let self-will obliterate one's (true spiritual) life (*mìng*); do not let attainment (of *Dào*) be sacrificed to fame. Diligently (*jīn*) observe these precepts (*shǒu*), and you will return to the Real (*zhēn*)."

*Zhuāngzǐ* 17; cf. CTT p.166

See also: *xìng*, *xìngmìng*.

**mitakuye oyasin** (Lakota) *Lit.* all (*oyasin*) my relatives (*mitakuye*), all my relations, we are all related; an expression, uttered frequently at key moments during rituals, which signifies and reminds the participants that all creatures and all things are related and interdependent, that no one should kill or be killed, that all should be treated with respect, and that all should express gratitude for the gift of life; an understanding that pervades Native American traditions and a part of the purpose behind all their rites and ceremonies.

*Mitakuye oyasin* is used at the end of many ceremonies and prayers (like 'Amen'), on opening the door to a sweat lodge to let in some cool air, after smoking the sacred pipe (Lakota, *chanunpa*), as a salutation conveying respect and an affirmation of reality, and so on. It expresses the understanding that

everything is a part of one divine Whole; even the rocks and soil are all connected by the same spirit essence within all. Wallace Black Elk recalls:

I learned all this little bitty, kindergarten stuff when I was five years old. We have a biological father and mother, but our real Father is *Tunkashila* (the Creator) and our real Mother is the Earth. They give birth and life to all living, so we know we're all interrelated. We all have the same Father and Mother. That is why you hear us always saying *mitakuye oyasin*. We say those words as we enter the sacred stone-people lodge (sweat lodge) and also at the end of every prayer. It means 'all my relations'. It helps to remind us that we are related to everything that exists.

*Wallace Black Elk, Sacred Ways of a Lakota, BESW p.4*

To understand fully the meaning of *mitakuye oyasin*, a person must seek a sense of kinship with all life, to feel connection and communion with all living creatures, to come to understand the underlying divine spirit that dwells in all things and all beings. In the Native American tradition, even rocks have spirit, life force and even feelings, as does the earth itself. To make this connection, one must learn to 'become' another creature. The American writer Thomas Mails (1920–2001) relates a conversation with the Oglala Lakota holy man and healer Frank Fools Crow (c.1890–1989), whose name for this process of tuning in to things, of feeling a connection with all things and other creatures is 'becoming':

"Stirrup (Fools Crow's primary teacher) taught me to hold an object in my hand and become it. If it is too big to hold in my hands, then I hold it in my heart."

I waited while he bent down and picked up a small, grey rock. He held it in his open palm and scrutinized it as he continued to speak. "*Wakan-Tanka* (Great Spirit) and Grandmother Earth have given all things life. This includes rocks, trees, water, and the ground we walk on. And just as people, animals, birds, bugs and sea creatures have blood in them, so too everything else has thoughts, feelings, concerns, and hopes."

"What do you do," I asked, "to become something like a rock?"

"I talk to it like I do to a person, and I let the rock talk to me. It tells me where it comes from, what it has seen, what it has heard, and what it feels. We become friends. When we are finished, I have a whole new picture of that rock. Doing this expands the way I behave toward rocks and toward other things, and my mind grows. The more I do 'becoming,' the wiser I become about everything."

*Thomas Mails, Fools Crow, FCWM pp.51–52*

When Mails asked him specifically whether he thought that rock or earth had feelings, Fools Crow explained it this way:

If everything that has been created is essential to life and balance and harmony, then they do (have feelings). It depends on how you think and how you define life. If you believe something has life, it has life. *Wakan-Tanka* has taught us to think about creation this way, and when we do, the life all things have within them becomes apparent to us, and we treat them accordingly. We do not abuse or misuse them. It is one thing to step on something you think has no life or feelings, and another to step on something when you think it does. When I pray each day, I pray for the health and healing of the whole creation not just for people. And I ask *Wakan-Tanka* and the helpers to help me walk on Grandmother Earth with compassion and understanding for all that exists.

*Frank Fools Crow, in Fools Crow, FCWM p.52*

**mithyā-dṛiṣṭi, mithyā-darshana (S), micchā-diṭṭhi, micchā-dassana (Pa), log par lta ba (T), xiéjiàn (C), jaken (J)** *Lit.* wrong (*mithyā, log par, xié, ja*) view (*darshana, dṛiṣṭi, lta, jiàn, ken*); false view; erroneous perception, belief, or faith; heresy; terms most frequently found in Buddhism and Jainism, where *mithyā-dṛiṣṭi* and *micchā-diṭṭhi* are more common than *mithyā-darshana* and (especially) *micchā-dassana*. *Mithyā-dṛiṣṭi* is contrasted with *samyag-dṛiṣṭi* (S. right viewpoint; Pa. *sammā-diṭṭhi*), which is the first of the eight noble truths, the understanding and practice of which leads to the end of suffering.

In Buddhism, unless qualified as *sammā-diṭṭhi*, *diṭṭhi* generally refers to an opinion, view, belief, doctrine or system that is regarded as speculative, false, or incorrect. According to the *Dhammapada*, the Buddha considered the following of false doctrines to be the result of living a life founded upon confusion, unable to distinguish good from evil:

Do not follow evil paths (*dhammas*);  
 Do not live in heedlessness (*pamāda*);  
 Do not embrace false doctrines (*micchā-diṭṭhi*);  
 Do not be a friend of the world. . . .

Those who are ashamed of what is not shameful  
 and are unashamed of the shameful  
 embrace false doctrines (*micchā-diṭṭhi*)  
 and enter a realm of misery (*duggati*).

They who find fear in what is not to be feared  
 and find no fear in what they ought to fear  
 embrace false doctrines (*micchā-diṭṭhi*)  
 and enter a realm of misery.



Those who see faults in the faultless  
and see no wrong in what is wrong  
embrace false doctrines (*micchā-diṭṭhi*)  
and enter a realm of misery.

Those who see wrong as wrong and right as right  
embrace true doctrines (*sammā-diṭṭhi*)  
and enter a realm of bliss (*suggati*).

*Dhammapada 13:1, 22:11–14; cf. DPN, DPR*

Any form of *mithyā-dṛishṭi* results in an increase of suffering and is said to originate in a misunderstanding or complete ignorance of *karma*, reincarnation, and the chain of causality (*nidāna*). Nāgārjuna says, “Wrong views (*mithyā-dṛishṭi*), pride (*abhimāna*) and doubt (*vichikitsā*) are founded upon spiritual ignorance (*avidyā*).”<sup>1</sup> He also says that, in a spiritual context, the “fool (*mūḍha*)” is a seeker whose understanding of Reality is clouded by *mithyā-dṛishṭi*:

The word ‘fool (*mūḍha*)’ does not mean stupid in the manner of an ox or sheep. The fool is a person who is seeking the true path, but who, as a result of wrong thoughts and contemplations, embraces all manner of wrong views (*mithyā-dṛishṭi*).

*Nāgārjuna, Mahāprajñāpāramitā Shāstra 1, T25 1509:60b; cf. TVW1 p.50*

Analysing the matter in greater detail, erroneous views are said to arise from clinging to any of the five *skandhas* (Pa. *khandhas*) – the five ‘aggregates’ or ‘collections’. Considered simply, the *skandhas* are aspects of mind and body, clinging or attachment to which gives rise to the illusory sense of I-ness or individuality. They represent the multiplicity of existence at the materio-mental level of existence. There are some variations among the various Buddhist schools in the way the five *skandhas* are understood, but fundamentally they are: corporeality or form (S/Pa. *rūpa*), which is experienced through the senses; feeling or sensation (S/Pa. *vedanā*), which is the corresponding mental sensation arising from the interaction between the five senses and the mind; perception or cognition (S. *saṃjñā*, Pa. *saññā*), which includes most aspects of everyday thinking, as well as mental function in higher spheres of consciousness; mental fabrications or formations (S. *saṃskāra*, Pa. *sankhāra*), which can be good or bad, and include such things as habits, conditioned attitudes, likes, dislikes, and other mental impressions that make up who an individual thinks he is; and lastly, personal consciousness (S. *viññāna*, Pa. *viññāna*), which in this context is understood to arise from the activities of the other *skandhas*, as for instance when the faculties of the mind and the five senses come into contact with their corresponding

‘objects’ – *i.e.* thoughts and the five material modes of matter (visible form, sound, smell, taste, and tangible things). It is this collection of mental and bodily ‘things’ that give rise to the illusory sense of an individual self that is subject to transmigration.

The way in which *micchā-diṭṭhi* arise from clinging to any of the five *skandhas* is outlined in the *Micchādiṭṭhi Sutta* of the *Saṃyutta Nikāya*,<sup>2</sup> where the Buddha says:

When there is form (*rūpa*), O monks (*bhikkhus*), by clinging to form, by adhering to form, wrong views (*micchā-diṭṭhi*) arise. When there is sensation (*vedanā*), by clinging to sensation, by adhering to sensation, wrong views (*micchā-diṭṭhi*) arise. When there is cognition (*saññā*), ... mental fabrications (*sankhāra*), ... (individual) consciousness (*viññāṇa*), by clinging to consciousness, by adhering to consciousness, wrong views (*micchā-diṭṭhi*) arise.

*Saṃyutta Nikāya* 22:154, *Micchādiṭṭhi Sutta*, PTSS3 p.184; cf. CDBB p.981

He then asks:

What do you think? Are form (*rūpa*), ... sensation (*vedanā*), ... cognition (*saññā*), ... mental fabrications (*sankhāra*), ... and (individual) consciousness (*viññāṇa*) permanent or impermanent?

*Saṃyutta Nikāya* 22:154, *Micchādiṭṭhi Sutta*, PTSS3 p.184; cf. CDBB p.981

The assembled monks reply, “Impermanent, sir,” to which the Buddha responds:

But could wrong views (*micchā-diṭṭhi*) arise without clinging to what is impermanent, suffering, and subject to change?

*Saṃyutta Nikāya* 22:154, *Micchādiṭṭhi Sutta*, PTSS3 p.185; cf. CDBB p.981

They reply that it could not. In other words, it is “clinging” or adhering to impermanent things that leads to the erroneous idea that they are permanent.

A similar dialogue is repeated in the *Diṭṭhisāṃyutta* of the *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, using the term *diṭṭhi* where *micchā-diṭṭhi* is implied. Following this, the Buddha considers numerous wrong views, pointing out once again that they only arise due to “clinging to what is impermanent, the cause of suffering, and subject to change”.<sup>3</sup> The list includes:

1. Something can belong to me, and I have an individual identity.
2. There are no consequences to the performance of deeds, whether good or bad; generosity is a “doctrine of fools”.

3. There is no evil in murder, torture, mutilation, robbery, adultery, and so on; nor are there any consequences to such evil actions.
4. There is no good in deeds of generosity and charity, however great; no merit is obtained nor are there any consequences of such good deeds. Living beings are entirely the victims of destiny and circumstance, over which they have no power or control.
5. The purity and impurity of living beings has no origin.
6. The self is entirely happy after death; the self is entirely miserable after death; the self is both happy and miserable after death.
7. The self has a form that is unimpaired after death; the self is formless and is unimpaired after death; the self is neither formless nor possessed of form.
8. The world is eternal; the world is not eternal.
9. The world is infinite; the world is not infinite.
10. A *tathāgata* exists after death; a *tathāgata* does not exist after death.
11. The body and self are the same; the body and self are different.

The last four views comprise the four unanswerable questions, the ‘undeclared issues’ or ‘unexpounded things (*avyākṛita-vastu*)’ that the Buddha said could never receive satisfactory intellectual answers. In their full form they are generally posed as, for example: “Is the world eternal, or not, or both, or neither?” – and likewise for the other three.<sup>4</sup>

Several *suttas* record attempts to persuade the Buddha to provide answers to these questions, but he makes no reply because – since these things cannot be understood intellectually – any conceptual answer that is given might lead to the false notion that something fundamental has actually been understood. The Buddha regarded the attempt to answer such questions as speculation – something he did not encourage – and as distractions from the very practical task of meditation and overcoming human imperfections. Of course, this has not prevented intellectuals from trying to analyse why the Buddha did not reply to such questions, forgetting perhaps that such intellectual analysis and speculation were the very things that he taught should be avoided.

“All of these (questions),” say the Pali *suttas*, a monk (*bhikkhu*) “has thrown off, shaken off, renounced, vomited up, let go, abandoned, and relinquished”.<sup>5</sup> “Understanding this, he is not paralysed, does not quake, and does not shiver or

shake over the undeclared issues.”<sup>6</sup> That is to say, a monk who has understood the limitations of the intellect and conceptual thought is undisturbed by the absence of answers to these questions. Metaphysical speculations, says the Buddha in conversation with the itinerant Vacchagotta, are simply “a thicket of views (*diṭṭhi*), a wilderness of views (*diṭṭhi*), a contortion of views (*diṭṭhi*), a vacillation of views (*diṭṭhi*), a fetter of views (*diṭṭhi*)”.<sup>7</sup>

Many of the “wrong views” mentioned in the Pali *suttas* appear to have been put forward by contemporary philosophical and spiritual teachers. The *Brahmajāla Sutta* of the *Dīgha Nikāya* lists sixty-two such incorrect *diṭṭhis*, the topics being largely centred upon the existence or otherwise of a self, whether anything survives death, mortality and immortality, finitude and infinity, reincarnation and recollection of past lives, whether actions have consequences, the attainment of *nibbāna*, and various associated speculative notions. Each of the “wrong views” is identified with an example, as in the several cases in which a *samaṇa* (spiritual practitioner) by dint of “mental concentration” has been able to recall the details of “several hundred thousand past births” and concludes (incorrectly) from the experience that both the self and the world are eternal.<sup>8</sup> As well as purporting to express the conclusions of philosophers and spiritual practitioners of the day, the catalogue of wrong views is also a refutation of the possible alternatives to Buddhist doctrine that a thinking person might put forward.

Five fundamentally wrong views or false beliefs, which more or less cover all possible wrong views, are mentioned in the analytical literature of early Buddhism:

1. *Satkāya-dṛishṭi* or *ātma-dṛishṭi* (belief in a self); belief in an enduring self or soul, a reference to the Hindu doctrine of an eternal self (*ātman*).
2. *Shāshvata-dṛishṭi* (eternity belief); belief that the self is eternal and continues to transmigrate from one body to another.
3. *Uchcheda-dṛishṭi* (annihilation belief, nihilism); belief that the self is annihilated at death and that consequently there is no rebirth or law of *karma*. *Shāshvata-dṛishṭi* and *uchcheda-dṛishṭi* are known as the *antagrāha-dṛishṭi* (extreme beliefs).
4. *Dṛishṭi-parāmarsha* (attachment to beliefs); beliefs founded on wrong ideas, dogmatism.
5. *Shīlavrata-parāmarsha* (attachment to ceremonies).<sup>9</sup>

Entertaining a wrong view or understanding of the nature of life results in continued bondage to the cycle of birth and death. According to the *Vipallāsa Sutta* of the *Anguttara Nikāya*, there are four fundamental perversions

(*vipallāsa*) of perception (*saññā*), mind (*citta*) and view (*diṭṭhi*) that lead sentient beings to misunderstand the nature of life and thus to continue endlessly in *saṃsāra* (transmigration):<sup>10</sup>

1. Perceiving impurity (*asubha*) as purity.
2. Perceiving what has no self (*anattā*) as self.
3. Perceiving suffering (*dukkha*) as pleasure.
4. Perceiving impermanence (*anicca*) as permanence.

In Jainism, *mithyā-dṛiṣṭi guṇasthāna* is the first and lowest stage (*guṇasthāna*) on the spiritual path, where the soul is completely in the grip of either complete unbelief or a distorted understanding of the spiritual path. In this stage, due to the effect of all twenty-eight forms of *mohanīya karma* (deluding *karma*), the soul has no inkling of the right path to salvation. It remains in the grip of the passions, of rituals and false doctrines, of a one-sided view of things, of doubt and uncertainty, of intense attachment to the things and people of this world, and of spiritual ignorance (*ajñāna*). The individuals have sufficient understanding, to a greater or lesser extent, to function as human beings, but the degree of understanding is determined by the burden of *karma* that they carry.

*Mithyā-darshana shalya* – the thorn or pain (*shalya*) of false belief – is the last in a list of eighteen or sometimes twenty-five sins listed in Jain literature. The term indicates that belief in false doctrines leads to suffering. *Mithyā-darshana shalya* arises from mistakenly understanding something to be that which it is not.

*Mithyā-darshana* or *mithyā-dṛiṣṭi* is also the first of the five bondages (*bandha*) in Jain philosophy that bind the soul to this world, the other four being: *avirati* (intemperance, lack of self-control, non-abstinence); *pramāda* (heedlessness); *kashāya* (passions); and *yoga* (activity of body and mind).<sup>11</sup>

See also: **amarā-vikkhepika** (7.1), **mithyātva**, **samyaktva**, **uccheda-diṭṭhi**.

1. Nāgārjuna, *Mahāprajñāpāramitā Shāstra* 30, T25 1509:192c; cf. TVW2 p.835.
2. *Samyutta Nikāya* 22:154–59, *Micchādiṭṭhi Sutta*, PTSS3 pp.184–88.
3. *Samyutta Nikāya* 24:206–49, *Diṭṭhisamyutta*, PTSS3 pp.202–23; cf. CDBB pp.991–1003.
4. E.g. *Majjhima Nikāya* 72, *Aggivaṇṇagotta Sutta*, PTSM1 pp.485–89; *Anguttara Nikāya* 10:93, *Diṭṭhi Sutta*, PTSA5 pp.185–89.
5. *Anguttara Nikāya* 10:20, *Ariyavāsa Sutta*, PTSA5 p.31, ANTB.
6. *Anguttara Nikāya* 7:51, *Avyākata Sutta*, PTSA4 pp.69; cf. ANTB; see also *Majjhima Nikāya* 63 (*Cūlamālunkya Sutta*), 72 (*Aggivaṇṇagotta Sutta*), PTSM1 pp.426–32, 483–89.

7. *Majjhima Nikāya* 72, *Aggivaṇṇasutta Sutta*, *PTSM1* pp.485–86; cf. *MDBB* pp.591–92.
8. *Dīgha Nikāya* 1, *Brahmajāla Sutta*, *PTSD1* pp.12–46.
9. E.g. *Abhidharmakośha* 5:1c–d.
10. *Anguttara Nikāya* 4:49, *Vipallāsa Sutta*, *PTSA2* p.52.
11. E.g. Pūjyapāda, *Sarvārthasiddhi*, on *Tattvārtha Sūtra* 8:1, in *RPSJ* p.215.

**mithyā-jñāna** (S), **log pa'i shes pa** (T), **xié zhì** (C), **ja chi** (J) *Lit.* wrong (*mithyā*, *log pa*, *xié*, *ja*) knowledge (*jñāna*, *shes pa*, *xié*, *chi*); invalid, erroneous, false or incorrect cognition or perception; misconception or misunderstanding; can be either conceptual or actual; contrasted in Buddhism with *yathārtha-jñāna* (true cognition, perception of things as they are) and *yathābhūta-jñāna-darshana* (knowledge and vision that accords with reality, correct knowledge and vision, seeing things as they really are); a term prevalent in Jain, Buddhist, and Hindu traditions.

An example of actual misconception, commonly given in Indian philosophical traditions, is that of a man who catches hold of a rope in the dark and mistakes it for a snake. The man's ensuing response is based entirely on a misperception. Conceptual misconception is wrong belief (*mithyā-dṛiṣṭi*), although the question of what is a right or a wrong belief is itself often a matter of belief!

The *Nyāya* school of Indian philosophy endeavours to help distinguish true knowledge from false knowledge (*mithyā-jñāna*), and to provide the means of acquiring this knowledge by the correct logical procedure or 'rules' (*nyāya*). Mystics, however, rely not on logic to dispel incorrect perceptions and spiritual ignorance, but on the direct apprehension of Reality, experienced personally in deep meditation. The ninth-century Indian philosopher-mystic Shankara writes that it is false perception that veils Reality and leads to suffering, and realization of oneness with the Supreme that dispels it:

The knowledge that we are one with the Supreme is like a fire that altogether consumes the thick forest of spiritual ignorance (*avidyā*). For one who has realized this state of oneness, how can any seed remain for future transmigration (*saṃsāra*)?

When the vision of Reality comes, the veil of ignorance is completely lifted. As long as we perceive things falsely, our false perception (*mithyā-jñāna*) distracts us and makes us suffer. When that false perception is corrected, suffering (*duḥkha*) ends.

*Shankara, Vivekachūḍāmaṇi* 346–47; cf. *VCST* pp.157–58

The *Paramahansa Upanishad* writes that such a realized soul is free of all human limitations and imperfections:

The *paramahansa* (highest pure soul), ... having given up all thought of calumny, conceit, jealousy, ostentation, arrogance, attachment or aversion to things, joy and sorrow, lust (*kāma*) and anger (*krodha*), covetousness (*lobha*), self-delusion (*moha*), elation, envy, egoism, and the like, regards his body as a corpse, since he has thoroughly destroyed the body-idea. Being eternally free from the cause of doubt and of misconceived and false knowledge (*mithyā-jñāna*), realizing the eternal *Brahman*, he lives in That himself, with the consciousness, “I myself am He; I am That which is ever calm, immutable, undivided, of the essence of knowledge-bliss.” ... That (*jñāna*, wisdom) alone is his holy thread. Through knowledge of the unity of the *jīvātman* (living soul, incarnate soul) with the *paramātman*, the distinction between them is wholly gone.

*Paramahansa Upanishad 2; cf. MUM pp.4–5*

See also: **mithyā-dṛishṭi**.

**mithyātva** (S), **micchatta** (Pa) *Lit.* wrongness; falsity, illusion, unreality; in Jainism, one of the eighteen perversions or human weaknesses; a characteristic of the lowest stage (*mithyā-dṛishṭi guṇasthāna*) described on the Jain path to enlightenment; incorrect belief, false knowledge, false viewpoint, false belief (*mithyā-dṛishṭi*, *mithyā-darshana*); the converse of *samyaktva* (completeness, perfection, right belief); a term also used by some schools of Indian philosophy, where the meaning is similar to *avidyā* (nescience, spiritual ignorance); a little-used term in Buddhism, where it also implies deceit or falsehood.

According to the twelfth-century Jain teacher Hemachandra:

To have a misconception regarding the nature of the Divinity, the *guru*, and *dharma* (religion) is *mithyātva*. In other words, to regard as God one who is not worthy to be called God, to regard as *guru* one who does not deserve to be a guiding preceptor, and to accept as *dharma* what is contrary to *dharma* is *mithyātva*.

*Hemachandra, Yoga Shāstra 2:3, YSHG pp.28–29*

Jain teachers and commentators have subdivided *mithyātva* into various categories, which represent differing aspects of the belief in and the attitude towards false doctrines, and the ways of acquiring them.

Devagupta (C10th–11th CE), of the *Shvetāmbara* school, divides *mithyātva* into five categories:<sup>1</sup>

1. *Ābhigrahika*. *Lit.* grasped firmly; dogmatic assertion; the attitude of a fanatic; seeing no further than one’s own beliefs, which are defended

when challenged; considering an incorrect doctrine to be correct; acquired by unthinkingly adopting the false beliefs of others.

2. *Anābhigrahika. Lit.* not grasped firmly; accepting all doctrines as true, even if they are contradictory, without examining their merits and demerits.
3. *Ābhiniveshika. Lit.* obstinate; stubborn adherence to false beliefs, even when knowing them to be wrong.
4. *Sāṃshayika. Lit.* doubtful; uncertainty and indecision over whether a doctrine is true or not; doubt concerning the veracity of a doctrine; wavering belief, scepticism.
5. *Anābhogika. Lit.* innate; instinctive belief; believing something without ever questioning why one holds that belief.

The thirteenth-century *Digambara* scholar and poet Āśhādhara considers *mithyātva* under three categories:<sup>2</sup>

1. *Agrihīta. Lit.* unaquired; an instinctive, non-acquired belief or attitude, such as that originating in a past life.
2. *Grihīta. Lit.* acquired; a belief acquired from others, such as one's family or teachers with an incomplete understanding of reality.
3. *Sāṃshayika. See above.*

The tenth-century *Digambara* teacher (*āchārya*) Amitagati describes seven kinds of *mithyātva*:<sup>3</sup>

1. *Ekāntika. Lit.* one-sided; one-sided belief, without consideration of other viewpoints.
2. *Sāṃshayika. See above.*
3. *Vainayika. Lit.* incorrect; indiscriminate acceptance of all doctrines; a misplaced open-mindedness or misguided liberalism leading to indiscriminate reverence towards the deities, teachers, and doctrines of other paths.
4. *Grihīta. See above.*



5. *Viparīta*. *Lit.* reversed, turned around; belief that the true is false and the false is true.
6. *Naisargika*. *Lit.* natural, inherent; an instinctive belief; equivalent to *agrihīta* and *anābhogika*.
7. *Mūḍha-dṛishṭi*. *Lit.* confused viewpoint; false belief in which a person's understanding of God, the *guru*, and the spiritual path are all clouded by passion.

The *Digambara* Pūjyapāda lists five kinds of *mithyātva*, including the more general *ajñāna* (nescience, spiritual ignorance), but omitting *grihīta*, *naisargika*, and *mūḍha-dṛishṭi* from Amitagati's list. Pūjyapāda also categorizes them under two headings: inborn (*naisargika*) and acquired from others (*paropadesha-pūrvaka*), the latter being divided into four sub-categories.<sup>4</sup> There are also other variations of the same theme.

See also: **mithyā-dṛishṭi**, **samyaktva**.

1. Devagupta, *Navapada-Prakarana* 4, *NPLD*, in *JYMS* pp.47–48.
2. Āshādhara, *Sāgāra-dharmāmṛita* 1:5, *SDAM*, in *JYMS* p.48.
3. Amitagati, *Shrāvākāchāra* 2:1–13, *SAAD*, in *JYMS* p.48.
4. Pūjyapāda, *Sarvārthasiddhi*, on *Tattvārtha Sūtra* 8:1, in *EDJS* p.174.

**moe** ‘**uhane** (Hw) *Lit.* spirit (‘uhane) sleep (*moe*), soul sleep; in the native Hawaiian tradition, a dream experienced during sound sleep; distinguished from a *hihi‘o* (dream, vision), which is experienced when half awake or half asleep.<sup>1</sup> A person who interprets dreams is called a *wehewehe moe* ‘uhane (dream interpreter).

See also: **hihi‘o**, **lua** ‘**uhane** (8.2).

1. See *Nānā I Ke Kumu*, *NKK2* p.169.

**moksha** (S/H), **mokkha** (Pa/Pk), **mokh** (Pu), **thar pa** (T), **jiētuō** (C), **gedatsu** (J) *Lit.* liberation, salvation, redemption, deliverance, emancipation, freedom, escape, release; release from *saṃsāra* (‘wandering’, transmigration), *i.e.* from worldly existence and from the cycle of birth and death; realization of the soul's natural state of consciousness; final bliss and beatitude; one of the four primary goals (*padārtha*, *purushārtha*) of the Hindu tradition, the other three being *dharma* (performance of duty, good moral and ethical

conduct), *artha* (wealth, enjoyment of wealth), and *kāma* (pleasure, enjoyment of legitimate pleasures); contrasted with *saṃsāra* (the illusory world, the cycle of birth and death); also known as *mukti* (liberation) and *kaivalya* (aloneness, absolute union).

The goal of Indian philosophy and religion is *moksha*, although the various religions, schools and spiritual paths advocate different ways of attaining it. According to *Advaita Vedānta*, knowledge (*jñāna*), implying gnosis or mystical awareness, is the way. The *Mīmāṃsā* school says that *moksha* is gained through *karma yoga*, where *karma* means religious observances, *i.e.* the performance of Vedic rites. *Vishishṭa Advaita* believes that the path of devotion (*bhakti yoga*) is the way to *moksha*, with *jñāna yoga* and *karma yoga* being considered only as aids to devotion. In this context, *karma yoga* refers to selfless action (*karma*), according to the ideal of the *Bhagavad Gītā*. *Dvaita Vedānta* maintains that God's grace (*prasāda*) is the way by which liberation can be found. To the *Nyāya-Vaisheshika* school, liberation (*apavarga*) entails freedom from all qualifications of being, and is said to involve no pleasure, pain, happiness, or experience of any kind. The *Sāṃkhya* school asserts that liberation (*kaivalya*) is detachment from all matter. There is no pleasure or pain, but there is eternal peace, which is attained once a soul has been able to discriminate between spirit (*purusha*) and matter (*prakṛiti*).

In *aśtāṅga yoga*, *moksha* is achieved by following the eightfold path of *yama* (moral observance), *niyama* (self-control), *āsana* (posture), *prāṇāyāma* (breath control), *pratyāhāra* (withdrawal from the senses), *dhāraṇā* (concentration), *dhyāna* (meditation), and *samādhi* (absorption, ecstasy, transcendental consciousness).

In the *Bhagavad Gītā*, Kṛishṇa says that the sage attains liberation by control of the *prāṇas* (*prāṇāyāma*), withdrawal of the senses from external things (*pratyāhāra*), concentration (*dhāraṇā*) and meditation (*dhyāna*), while continuing to live normally in the world:

Shutting out all external sensory contacts;  
 Fixing the gaze between the eyebrows (*bhruvoḥ*);  
 Regulating the flow of *prāṇa* (incoming breath)  
     and *apāna* (outgoing breath) through the nostrils;  
 With the senses, mind, and intellect under control;  
 Free from desires, fear, and anger;  
 And aspiring liberation (*moksha*) alone –  
     a sage (*muni*) is forever liberated (*mukta*).

*Bhagavad Gītā* 5:27–28

Kṛishṇa also says that taking refuge in him, as the incarnation of God, will lead to *moksha*:

Though continuing to perform all forms of work (*karma*),  
 he who has taken refuge in Me, shall, by My grace,  
 attain the eternal and indestructible state of *moksha*.

*Bhagavad Gītā* 18:56

The *Sarvasāra Upanishad* defines *moksha* as liberation of the soul from false identification with things that are not the true self:

The soul (*ātmā*), falsely looking upon the body and other things that are not-self as itself, identifies itself with them. This egotism forms the bondage of the soul. Freedom from that is liberation (*moksha*).

*Sarvasāra Upanishad* 1–2; cf. *MUM* p.36, *TMU* p.10

For Indian *sants* such as Swami Shiv Dayal Singh, *moksha* means rising above the realms of mind and *māyā*, thus gaining release from birth and death. Here, *sahas-dal kamal* is the astral realm and *trikuṭī* is the highest level of the causal realm or universal mind:

There are two minds, *brahmāṇḍī* (universal) and *piṇḍī* (individual). The former has its seat in *trikuṭī* and *sahas-dal kamal*. . . . The latter is behind the eyes and in the heart. It is the *piṇḍī* mind which carries on the business of the world, with the help of the soul, which has become so attached to it as to acquire a downward tendency along with it towards the lower physical regions. The mind and the sense organs derive their power of action from the soul.

If the *jīvātmā*, *surat* or soul were to turn towards its real home and decrease its attachments to the physical world, it would find the way to liberation (*moksha*). When the *surat* reaches its real home in *sat lok*, beyond the regions of the *brahmāṇḍī* (universal, highest) mind, it will break all bonds – whether causal, subtle or gross, physical, sensual or mental. Its activities in the world will be in name only, will be reduced to a minimum, and that too to be terminated at will.

In short, till the *surat* or *jīvātmā* succeeds in breaking or at least loosening the *sūkshma* (subtle) and *kāraṇa* (causal) bonds which it has developed with the mind and the senses and, turning its back upon the impure regions of *piṇḍī* and *brahmāṇḍī*, inclines towards its real home and crosses the *brahmāṇḍī* mind, the knot between the *jar* (the unconscious) and the *chaitanya* (consciousness) will not be undone. The mind, the senses, body, worldly actions, enjoyments, *etc.* constitute the ‘unconscious’.

The soul is subtle and conscious, and the connection of the soul with the ‘unconscious’ is the knot. So long as this is not unravelled,

the connection of the soul with *māyā* is not ended and there is no liberation or *moksha*, no destruction of the seeds of desires and hopes.

*Swami Shiv Dayal Singh, Sār Bachan 1:8, SBAT pp.7–8*

In his poetry, he indicates that the means to attain this is through contact with the mystic Name or Word (*Shabd*):

O mind, see how sick is this world  
with falsehood and delusion.  
Strive to get rid of the countless perversions  
that fill your mind.  
Hold fast to the master's feet,  
and you will begin to see the deceptions of this illusory world.  
Then receive that infinite Name (*Nām*) from him,  
and find within yourself the door to salvation (*moksh*).  
Move carefully, discerning the various forms of *Shabd*  
till you find the one *Shabd* that is the sole Essence.

*Swami Shiv Dayal Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 19:20.1–5,*

*SBP p.154, SBPS pp.222–23*

Guru Nānak puts it simply:

In the lone village (of the body), live the five thieves:  
they have been warned, but they still go out stealing.  
One who keeps his assets safe  
from the three *guṇas* and the ten passions,  
O Nānak, attains liberation (*mokh*) and emancipation (*mukat*).

*Guru Nānak, Ādi Granth 503, AGK*

According to Buddhism, *moksha* is the eradication of all grasping (*upādāna*) and desire (*taṇhā*). The means to this is the noble eightfold path as taught by the Buddha, which includes adherence to the *prātimoksha* (means to liberation), the rules of monastic conduct expected of a Buddhist monk. *Moksha*, also called *vimoksha*, is often used synonymously with *nirvāṇa* (blowing out, extinction, enlightenment). An *arhat* (noble one, enlightened one) is one who has attained *moksha*, but is not necessarily a *buddha* – an enlightened one who teaches other sentient beings. Those who have led a good life may enter one of the many heavens (*svarga*) mentioned in Buddhist literature, but *moksha* is not attained simply by leading a spiritual or virtuous life, and Buddhist schools differ over whether all beings will eventually attain *moksha*.

In Jainism, *moksha* is the highest state of absolute union (*kaivalya*), in which the soul – freed from the bondage created by the influx of subtle karmic matter, according to the Jain theory of *karma* – leaves the body at the time

of death to dwell for all eternity as a *siddha* (perfected soul) at the pinnacle of the inhabited universe (*lokākāsha*). The revered Jain teacher Āchārya Kundakunda (traditionally dated to C2nd–3rd CE) writes that *moksha* (Pk. *mokkha*) is attained through realization of the soul's innate mystical knowledge or gnosis:

Realization of the Absolute is liberation. Those who are devoid of this attribute of knowledge, even though their efforts be several, do not attain this state. If you desire complete liberation from bondage (Pk. *kamma parimokkha*), you must contemplate upon this pure state of knowledge. O good soul, always remain in love with it and hence be happy and satisfied, for surely it will lead you to the future, everlasting, supreme bliss.

*Kundakunda, Samayasāra 204–6; cf. AKKS pp.347–49*

The means to this release are: right viewpoint (*samyag-darshana*), which implies adherence to the right (*i.e.* Jain) doctrine; right knowledge (*samyag-jñāna*); and right conduct (*samyak-chāritra*). Once a correct understanding of the nature of Reality has been attained, *moksha* is assured either in the present or in a future birth. *Moksha* is regarded as the last of nine fundamental Jain principles (*tattvas* or *padārthas*) regarding the soul and *karma*:

1. *Jīva*. Living, existing, alive, conscious; the soul, which inherently possesses infinite knowledge, life, and spirituality.
2. *Ajīva*. Lifeless, inert; the inertness of *karma* or karmic matter.
3. *Puṇya*. Meritorious, pure, righteous; virtue, merit; meritorious karmic matter.
4. *Pāpa*. Sin, evil; sinful karmic matter.
5. *Āsrava*. Flowing; the means by which karmic matter enters the soul.
6. *Bandha*. Bondage; the bondage caused by the flow of karmic matter into the soul.
7. *Samvara*. Blocking; impeding the flow of karmic matter into the soul.
8. *Nirjarā*. Annihilation; destruction of *karma* or karmic matter, leading to *bhāva-moksha* (liberation from worldly existence).
9. *Moksha*. Liberation; freedom and complete separation of the soul from all *karma* or karmic matter, leading to *dravya-moksha* (liberation from matter, actual liberation).

Two kinds of *moksha* are thus distinguished: *bhāva-moksha* and *dravya-moksha*. *Bhāva-moksha* arises with the destruction of the four kinds of binding (*ghātīyā*) *karma*. This can be attained during life, and is equivalent to the Hindu *jīvanmukti* (liberation while living). *Dravya-moksha* arises from the complete separation of the soul from *karma* at the time of death. As long as life remains, the soul

maintains its relationship with the body through the four kinds of *aghātiyā* (non-binding) *karma*. Only at death can the soul be free from bondage to the body and the *karma* that keeps it incarnate. *Dravya-moksha* is the highest possible attainment of the soul, in which it realizes its innate freedom from all bondage, and enters a state of eternal beatitude. According to Jain scriptures:

The modification of the soul that is the cause of the destruction of all *karma*, is surely to be known as *bhāva-moksha*; and actual separation from that *karma* is *dravya-moksha*.

*Nemichandra, Dravya Saṃgraha 37; cf. DSNS p.64*

The extremely pure modification of the soul that is the cause of destruction of all kinds of *karma* in a person desirous of good, is regarded as *bhāva-moksha* by the *Jinas* (enlightened souls).

The actual separation of the conscious soul from all kinds of *karma* by excellent meditation is known as *dravya-moksha*. By *bhāva-moksha*, therefore, one is freed from the first four, and by *dravya-moksha* from the last four kinds of *karma*. Both these kinds of *moksha* together lead to perfect liberation.

*Vardhamāna Purāṇa 16:72–73; cf. in DSNS pp.64–65*

The destruction of karmic matter accumulated from previous births is achieved by performing various austerities and spiritual practices, such as fasting and meditation. The influx of new *karma* is prevented by virtuous conduct and by adherence to the vows (*vrata*) taken by laypeople and mendicants. *Moksha* is hence regarded as a matter of personal effort rather than divine grace. Once *kevala-jñāna* (omniscience) has been attained through the destruction of all binding or harming *karma*, *moksha* is assured in that life. The only *karma* that remains is the non-binding or non-harming *karma* that relates to living out the remaining span of life in a physical body. On leaving the body at the end of life, the soul rises above all the heavenly realms to *siddhaloka*, which is located at the very pinnacle of the inhabited universe (*lokākāśha*). There it dwells eternally in its own true nature of infinite consciousness and bliss.

*Kevala-jñāna* and *moksha* can only be attained by human beings who are living in this world where *karma* can be created (*karma-bhūmi*), and then only during the third and fourth epochs of each half cycle of time according to Jain cosmology, when *Tīrthankaras* are actively teaching. According to the beliefs of the *Shvetāmbara* school, both men and women can attain liberation. *Digambaras*, on the other hand, maintain that omniscience and liberation are only attainable by men; women have to take birth as men before they can attain liberation. Both schools believe that there are two kinds of soul: *bhavya* (suitable), who constitute the majority and who have the potential for *moksha*; and *abhavya* (unsuitable), who lack the innate capacity for liberation<sup>1</sup> and who will always remain at the first stage (*guṇasthāna*)

of spiritual development – that of delusion (*mithyātva*). The quality of *bhavyatva* (suitability) is generally dormant, and needs to be awakened by suitable circumstances, such as meeting a *Tīrthankara*, by seeing an image of him, by hearing his teachings, or by the recollection of past lives. It is possible that some *bhavya* souls may never encounter such circumstances, and thus never attain liberation.

See also: **kaivalya**, **karma** (6.3), **mukti**, **nirvāṇa**, **vimoksha**.

1. See e.g. Kundakunda, *Samayasāra* 273–75, 317.

**mubālāh** (A), **mubālāt** (P) *Lit.* attention, consideration, heed, caring for; mindfulness; remaining conscious of the presence of God at all times, as opposed to heedlessness (*ghaflah*).

Anṣārī says that *mubālāt* grows out of spiritual practice (*mu‘āmalat*), and describes it as a sense of constant awareness of the unceasing flow of divine beneficence in relation to one’s own shortcomings. “Mindfulness (*mubālāt*),” he says, “involves constant concern, and may be acquired through three things.” The three things he mentions that lead to mindfulness of the Divine are: fear that one should not lose the grace of God through sinfulness and misbehaviour; shame, such that one never underestimates the grace of God in the face of one’s own impurities; and love, whereby one does not forget that God is always watching, even when one is unmindful of Him.<sup>1</sup>

See also: **apramāda**, **ghaflah** (6.2).

1. Anṣārī, *Ṣad Maydān* 18, *SMA* p.27.

**mūḍhatā** (S/H) *Lit.* bewilderment, perplexity, confusion, folly, stupidity, ignorance; false belief, delusion; in Jainism, the three categories of confused or stupid belief or superstition (*mūḍha-dṛishṭi*) from which the mind must be freed in order to understand correctly the true or right doctrine (*samyaktva*). Jain texts that describe the three *mūḍhatā* often take the opportunity to condemn some Hindu practices and customs as *mūḍhatā*. The three *mūḍhatā* are:<sup>1</sup>

1. *Loka-mūḍhatā*. False beliefs in a variety of popular religious practices, such as the attainment of moral purity and acquisition of religious merit by bathing in ‘holy’ rivers rather than by personal effort and self-control. By way of example of such ‘stupid’ practices, Samantabhadra lists bathing in rivers and oceans, creating piles of stones or sand, leaping off a cliff, and entering fire (presumably as in the Hindu custom of the *satī*, the widow who voluntarily immolates herself on her husband’s funeral

pyre). Hemachandra similarly derides the worship of material things such as stones, gems and trees, and reverential use of the five products of the cow (*pañcha-gavya*: milk, curd, butter, urine, and faeces).

2. *Deva-mūḍhatā*. Belief in, worship of and propitiation of gods (*deva*). Samantabhadra says that to worship gods who (according to Indian legend) are troubled by lust and hatred is a misunderstanding of the nature of divinity. Hemachandra describes them as addicted to women, weapons, and rosaries – symbolizing their involvement with lust, hatred, and delusion – unlike the *Jina* (the Jain divinity) who is devoid of all such negative passions and confusions. Deities who indulge in dancing, music and drama, he says, are unable to bring their worshippers any benefit.
3. *Pāśhaṇḍi-mūḍhatā*. Belief in, reverence for and entertainment of heretics (*pāśhaṇḍī*), i.e. false *gurus* and ascetics who, says Samantabhadra, are engaged in worldly activities, have not renounced their possessions, and who cause harm (*hiṃsā*) to other living beings. Hemachandra depicts false *gurus* as those who desire women, wealth and property, who eat meat and drink alcohol, who lead a family life, and who promulgate false teachings.

Hemachandra writes:

The gods (*devas*) who are tainted by passions such as attachment to women, weapons and rosaries, and who favour some and disfavour others, are not the gods who should be worshipped by those desirous of liberation (*mukti*). How can such gods, who themselves are unsteady and disturbed by drama, boisterous laughter and music, ever lead their followers on the tranquil path to *mukti*?

One who observes the five great vows (non-violence, truth, non-stealing, continence, and non-attachment), one lives only on alms, one who always preserves his equanimity, and one who preaches the true *dharma* may be called a true *guru*.

One who hankers after all things, eats and drinks indiscriminately, is attached to his possessions, does not practise continence, and preaches a misleading doctrine, can never be called a true *guru*.

Can those who are themselves deeply engrossed in worldly activities and attached to their possessions, free others from worldly existence? Certainly not, because those who are poor cannot make others rich.

*Hemachandra, Yoga Shāstra 2:6–10; cf. YSHG pp.29–31*

Using the term in a more general context, the Indian *sant* Tulsīdās (1532–1623) describes the mind itself as full of stupidity and spiritual ignorance for its forgetfulness of God:



Such is the folly (*mūḍhatā*) of this mind.  
 Discarding devotion to God, which is like the holy Ganges,  
 it places its hope in mere dewdrops;  
 Like a thirsty rainbird that sees a cloud of smoke  
 and mistakes it for a rain cloud,  
 but finds neither coolness nor water,  
 rather its eyes are blinded;  
 Like a stupid hawk that sees its own reflection  
 on a mirrored floor,  
 and, driven by impatience for food, swoops on it,  
 forgetting the damage to its beak –  
 Such are the ways of the mind.

At what length should I recount its misdeeds,  
 O Storehouse of Compassion?  
 You know the ways of this poor one's mind.  
 Banish then, the unbearable pain of Tulsīdās,  
 and keep the honour of Your own pledge.

*Tulsīdās, Vinay Patrikā 90, TGTD p.372*

1. See e.g. Samantabhadra, *Ratnakaraṇḍa Shrivakāchāra* 1:23–24, *RSSP*; Hemachandra, *Yoga Shāstra* 2:6–10, 4:94–100, *YSHG* pp.29–31, in *JYMS* p.49.

**muditā** (S/H/Pa), **dga' ba** (T), **xī** (C), **ki** (J) *Lit.* gladness, delight, joy, satisfaction; also, in Sanskrit, complacency; in Buddhism, altruistic, empathetic, sympathetic or appreciative and genuine happiness at the welfare and good fortune of others with no hint of jealousy; the third of the four sublime abodes (Pa. *brahmavihāra*) or immeasurables (Pa. *appamaññā*).

The four *brahmavihāras* are among the forty classical meditation subjects and topics (*kammaṭṭhāna*) listed in the *Abhidhamma* (systematic analysis of the *suttas*), the commentarial literature, and other Buddhist texts such as Buddhaghosa's *Visuddhimagga*.<sup>1</sup> The other three are: lovingkindness (*mettā*), compassion (*karuṇā*), and equanimity (*upekkhā*).

As forms of meditation, the practitioner consciously fills his mind with these qualities, which are then deliberately broadcast to the entire world, reaching out to all sentient beings – family, local community, country, and far beyond. These qualities are called 'immeasurables' because in their perfection and essential nature they are universal, applicable to the entire universe. One who is imbued with these qualities is universal in outlook, having no prejudice or preference regarding any individual or any particular group, class, tribe, race, nation, religion, and so on. They are called *brahmavihāras* because they are understood as divine states of mind.

Although not all authorities are in agreement, Buddhaghosa, who devotes a long section of his *Visuddhimagga* to the subject of the *brahmavihāras*,<sup>2</sup> maintains that meditation on the first three *brahmavihāras* can result in attainment of the first three of the four lower *jhānas*, but only meditation on *upekkhā* can result in attainment of the fourth *jhāna*, whose primary characteristic is *upekkhā* born of *ekaggatā* (one-pointedness). *Upekkhā* is a balanced, peaceful and blissful state of consciousness that neither clings to anything nor is averse to anything.

Comparing oneself with others, either favourably or unfavourably, leads to discontent and either envy or a sense of superiority. Even the joy of parents and teachers at the successes of their charges is not without self-interest. The same parents and teachers may not feel the same regarding the good fortune of the children or students of others. Meditation on *muditā* is intended to counter all such feelings concerning others. The German-born *Theravāda* monk Nyanaponika Thera (1901–1994) writes:

Not only to compassion, but also to joy with others – open your heart! Small, indeed, is the share of happiness and joy allotted to beings! Wherever a little happiness comes to them, then you may rejoice that at least one ray of joy has pierced through the darkness of their lives, and dispelled the grey and gloomy mist that enwraps their hearts.

Your life will gain in joy by sharing the happiness of others as if it were yours. Did you never observe how in moments of happiness men's features change and become bright with joy? Did you never notice how joy rouses men to noble aspirations and deeds, exceeding their normal capacity? Did not such experience fill your own heart with joyful bliss? It is in your power to increase such experience of sympathetic joy, by producing happiness in others, by bringing them joy and solace.

*Nyanaponika Thera, Four Sublime States, FSSN p.18*

The American Buddhist writer Winston King (1907–2000) observes:

Such sympathetic joy is undoubtedly a difficult attainment except on those rare occasions in which another's good fortune is our own, either in physical fact or by social linkage. Ordinarily the good fortune of another does not actually include us. As often as not the good fortune of another only reminds us of our own failure or misfortune. Or, even more poignantly, in the usually competitive situations of life, another's good fortune is actually our misfortune; for both of us have been striving for the same prize, but only one of us can gain it. The perfection of *muditā* in this situation would be a real joy, indeed a completely joyful joying, in the other's success as though it were our own.

Must one wait until he has become a saint (*arahanta*), who no longer competes with anyone for anything and whose consciousness has been

totally purified of any distinction between own-self and other-self, before he can exercise *mudītā*? Again the answer is, No! One may and ought to begin doing so even now, on whatever level of attainment he may be. For the saint's perfection is built only out of countless previous and imperfect efforts to exercise *mudītā* under all circumstances.

Winston King, *In the Hope of Nibbāna*, HPET p.147

See also: **brahmavihāra** (8.5).

1. Buddhaghosa, *Visuddhimagga* 3–11, PTSV pp.84–372.
2. Buddhaghosa, *Visuddhimagga* 9, PTSV pp.295–325.

**mufiq** (A/P) *Lit.* convalescence, recovering (from illness, fainting, or intoxication); one who has returned to his senses; one who has returned to sanity after a temporary state of intoxication or madness; mystically, the return to normal waking consciousness after an ecstatic flight into mystic intoxication (*sukr*).

*Sukr* refers to a blissful state of such intoxicating power that a person's behaviour becomes abnormal, and the individual loses control over himself. Such intoxication is generally contrasted with *ṣaḥw* (sobriety), a state of spiritual maturity in which the soul progresses yet higher into the blissful realms of divine beauty, yet the individual remains in control of himself, and his outward behaviour remains normal. The contrast is between one who is able to digest the flood of divine grace within himself, using it for further spiritual ascent, and the other who is unable to do so. *Mufiq* is the state of consciousness of one who has returned from a state of intoxication (*sukr*).

See also: **ṣaḥw**, **sukr**.

**muḥāḍarah** (A), **muḥāẓarat** (P) *Lit.* attendance, presence, audience; also, appearing before or against someone; also, lecture; in Sufism, a level of contemplation in which the seeker is constantly occupied with the remembrance of and being in the presence of the divine Beloved, and yet remains veiled:

Presence (*muḥāḍarah*) signifies vision (*ru'yah*) prior to the lifting of the veil (*ḥijāb*).

Tahānawī, *Kashshāf Iṣṭilāḥāt al-Funūn*, KIFT1 p.404; cf. in SSE7 p.30

*Muḥāḍarah* is commonly described as the first of three increasingly deep levels of mystic contemplation, the other two being *mukāshafah* (unveiling, revelation) and *mushāhadah* (witnessing, contemplative vision). These three are related to the experience of the soul on its ascent through the various levels of creation.

In the Sufi description of the creation, the divine Essence (*al-Dhāt*) first manifests His Names (*Asmā'*); from His Names are manifested His Attributes (*Ṣifāt*), from His Attributes – His Acts (*Af'āl*), and from His Acts – His Signs or Works (*Āthār*). The levels, realms or worlds of creation are correspondingly named, in ascending order, the world of Works (*'ālam al-Āthār*, the physical world), the world of Acts (*'ālam al-Af'āl*), the world of His Attributes (*'ālam al-Ṣifāt*), the world of His Names (*'ālam al-Asmā'*), and the world of the Essence (*'ālam al-Dhāt*).

Of the three levels of contemplation, *muḥāḍarah* is contemplation at the level of His Acts, *mukāshafah* is contemplation at the level of His Attributes, and *mushāhadah* at the level of the divine Essence. Precise words possessing an esoteric meaning that corresponds to these degrees of contemplation do not exist in English, and whatever translations are chosen are thus inevitably awkward and to some extent misleading:

Presence (*muḥāḍarah*) is said to be contemplation (*shuhūd*) of the divine manifestation of the Acts (*Af'āl*), while revelation (*mukāshafah*) is contemplation of divine manifestations of the Attributes (*Ṣifāt*). Contemplative vision (*mushāhadah*) is the name given to contemplation of subtle manifestations of the Essence (*Dhāt*).

*Maḥmūd Qāshānī, Miṣbāḥ al-Hidāyah wa-Miftāḥ al-Kifāyah,*  
MHK p.131; cf. in SSE7 p.30

Or put more generally, though using an abundance of terms:

Presence (*muḥāḍarah*) is for those in fluctuation (*talwīn*), while contemplative vision (*mushāhadah*) is for those who enjoy stability (*tamkīn*); revelation (*mukāshafah*) lies between the two, remaining until contemplative vision (*mushāhadah*) is established. Consequently, presence (*muḥāḍarah*) is experienced by those who possess certain knowledge (*'ilm al-yaqīn*), revelation (*mukāshafah*) by those who possess the eye of certitude (*'ayn al-yaqīn*), and contemplative vision (*mushāhadah*) by those who possess certain Truth (*Ḥaqq al-yaqīn*).

*'Umar al-Suhrawardī, 'Awārif al-Ma'ārif, AMU p.529; cf. in SSE7 pp.30–31*

**mukāshafah** (A), **mukāshafat** (P) (pl. *mukāshafāt*) *Lit.* unveiling, revelation, disclosure; mystical revelation; from the same root as *kashf* (unveiling); used either in a general sense or for the second of three increasingly deep levels of inward contemplation, the first being *muḥāḍarah* (presence), the second *mukāshafah*, and the third *mushāhadah* (witnessing or contemplative vision).

In the more general sense, *mukāshafah* refers to mystical experience or revelation of divine mysteries at several levels of creation:

In the *Kashf al-Lughāt*, it is stated that revelation (*mukāshafah*) is said to entail manifestation (to the inner consciousness) of the human (*nāsūt*) and angelic (*malakūt*) realms, and those of power (*jabarūt*) and divinity (*lāhūt*); that is to say, one perceives the reality of the *nafs* (lower mind), the heart (*dil*), the soul (*rūḥ*), and the inner consciousness (*sirr*).

*Tahānawī, Kashshāf Iṣṭilāḥāt al-Funūn, KIFT4 p.20; cf. in SSE7 pp.35–36*

Ibn al-ʿArabī also speaks of *mukāshafah* in a general manner when he says that it brings with it a mystical knowledge (*ʿilm*) of how the creation is put together:

The knowledge (*ʿilm*) of revelation (*mukāshafah*) is the inner and ultimate knowledge. It is the knowledge of the sincere and those intimate with God. It is the light that appears in the heart in the course of its ablution and purification from blameworthy attributes. When the light appears, a multitude of things are revealed, accompanied by true gnosis of the Essence of God and of His eternal and perfect Attributes. Furthermore, one comes to understand God’s arrangement of things with respect to created existence in both the worlds, the knowledge of the spiritual realities (*maʿnā*) of prophetic mission and the Prophet, and the manifestation of angels to the prophets. One also understands the nature of the granting of prophetic revelation to the angels and the angelic realm (*malakūt*) of the heavens and the earth. The latter refers to those people who enjoy different stations with respect to the spiritual realities of these things, once they have understood and accepted the principles governing them.

The result of the knowledge of revelation (*mukāshafah*) is to lift the veil, so that God’s presence becomes directly observable (*ʿiyān*) to the possessors of this knowledge, such that doubt and uncertainty are utterly banished from them. Human acquisition of this kind of knowledge is made possible only if the mirror of the heart is not stained by the impurities of the world and is free of corrosion.

*Ibn al-ʿArabī, in Mohyī al-Dīn ibn ʿArabī, MDA p.177; cf. in SSE9 pp.122–23*

Rūzbihān says that *mukāshafat* is a characteristic of the prophets and is the essential nature of their inward journey. He goes on to consider *mukāshafat* as it relates to the traditional tripartite categorization of spiritual seekers – the beginner, the advanced, and the perfect or “elect of the elect”. Each experiences a deeper degree of revelation, and only to the latter are the highest mysteries of God revealed. They rise above the rules of formal religion:

The station of revelation (*mukāshafat*) is particular to the prophets, being the journey of ascent (*miʿrāj*) of the prophets and the manner by

which the friends of God (*awliyā'*) proceed. Once stations (*maqāmāt*) and states (*aḥwāl*) are passed, it is granted to those who have earned God's trust. This attribute appears once ecstasy has become constant, for if it were to come in the early stages of ecstasy, excitement (*ḥayajān*) would result, which entails incompleteness, because there are traces of intoxication (*sukr*)...

Visionary revelation (*mukāshafat*) combined with witnessing (*mushāhadat*) is of three categories:

For the beginner, contemplative vision (*mushāhadat*) in the course of revelation (*mukāshafat*) and revelation (*mukāshafat*) without contemplative vision (*mushāhadat*) opens up the constricted consciousness through the lights of certitude (*yaqīn*), so that their imprisoned spirits may catch sight of traces of the lights of the angelic realm (*malakūt*) and flashes (*lama'āt*) of lightning of the realm of power (*jabarūt*), so that they may become strengthened in devout action by that light, shedding the encrustation of passions from the mirror of their hearts, in order that the governance of the essence of God may be fully actualized therein. Most of the visionary revelations (*mukāshafat*) of the beginner appear in sleep or between sleep and wakefulness, for they are remote from the play of mysteries to which the liberated are privy.

Revelation (*mukāshafat*) for the elect is that which is revealed every moment out of the angelic realm (*malakūt*) into the meditation (*murāqabat*) of these self-abnegated ones for the sake of renewing their devotion (*irādat*). It adorns the frame of the Might with the purity (*ṣafā*) of its attributes, so that they may see the realm of divinity (*lāhūt*) in the human realm (*nāsūt*) with the eyes of Divinity, plunge into the Unseen of the Unseen while in the Presence of the Presence, and experience the prodigies of states and the wonders of Acts through God.

Revelation (*mukāshafat*) for the elect of the elect involves the opening of the gates of the realm of the spirits, the manifestation of the radiance of the suns of the Attributes, the revelation (*kashf*) of the Sanctity of the Sanctity, and the elevation of pre- and post-eternal qualities, so that the elect of the elect may see God shorn of the conventions of divinity, and speak with and hear God. God reveals the hidden aspects of His mystery to them, so that they may be sequestered in the assembly of Oneness through God's Oneness, emerge drunk and joyous from God's eternal Presence, plunder the city of the *sharī'at*, and take up shocking behaviour (*'ayyārī*) and raving (*shaṭṭāhī*). This matter is not for the unripe or the casual-hearted. This is the marketplace of the mysteries of those well-established in divine Unity (*tawḥīd*), the men of the wilderness of detachment from self (*tafrīd*, seclusion). A single particle of this would lay waste a hundred thousand worlds of Islam, and it is not for just anyone, nor can anyone who is inexperienced be made to understand it.

Using the term in an entirely non-specific sense, al-Ghazālī recounts a Muslim legend concerning the revelations of Jesus:

It is related that Jesus in one of his revelations (*mukāshafah*) saw this world in the form of an old hag. “How many husbands have you had?” he asked her.

“Too many to be counted,” she replied.

“Did they die or divorce you?” he asked.

“I killed them all,” she replied.

“How strange of these other fools,” he said, “They see, but they take no warning.”

*Al-Ghazālī, Counsel for Kings 1, TMNM, GCK pp.33–34*

See also: **muḥāḍarah**, **mushāhadah**.

**mukti**, **mukti pad(a)** (S/H/Pu), **mokkha** (Pa/Pk), **mukkha** (Pk), **mukat** (Pu)  
*Lit.* freedom (*mukti*); hence, liberation, salvation, release or redemption from the bondage of *karma* and consequent wheel of birth and death; an extremely blissful, superconscious state in which the soul knows or realizes its own true state or nature, above the realms of the mind; the realms or state (*pada*) of liberation (*mukti*); a term common to Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism; also called *apavarga*, *kaivalya*, *moksha*, *nirvāṇa*, *vimukti*, and by various other names.

Several forms of *mukti* are mentioned. Indian schools of philosophy distinguish between *jīvanmukti* (liberation while still living in the body) and *videhamukti* (liberation after leaving the body). *Jīvanmukti* is sometimes called *kaivalyamukti*. *Kramamukti* (liberation by stages, gradual emancipation) is also described, in which the soul, upon death of the physical body, gradually progresses through the inner planes until it reaches the heavenly region known as *hiraṇyagarbha*, also called *brahmaloka*. While enjoying life there, the soul readies itself for the time of *pralaya* (dissolution at the end of a creative cycle), at which time the soul and *brahmaloka* together merge back into *Brahman* (absolute Reality). The path of *kramamukti* is also called *devayāna* (path of the gods), as opposed to *pitṛiyāna* (path of the ancestors), which leads to rebirth.

The *Upanishads* identify *mukti* as union with *Brahman*:

For one who does not know (the reality of) “I am *Brahman*,” liberation (*mukti*) does not arise.

*Paingala Upanishad 4:23; cf. PU p.924*

According to the *Bhagavad Gītā*, *mukti* requires complete detachment from self-interest in the outcome of actions:

Whatever you do, whatever you eat,  
 whatever you offer in sacrifice,  
 whatever you give in charity,  
 whatever austerity you perform –  
 Do it as an offering to Me.

Thus will you be freed from reaping  
 the good and bad fruits of karmic bondage.  
 And with a mind firmly resolved on renunciation,  
 thus, liberated (*vimukta*), you will come to Me.

*Bhagavad Gītā 9:27–28*

And:

Wise men, those possessing undisturbed evenness of mind,  
 having forsaken desire for the fruits of their actions,  
 reach the state of liberation (*vinirmukta*)  
 from suffering and from entanglement in birth (and death).

*Bhagavad Gītā 2:51*

Shankara identifies *mukti* as the purpose of human life. But the seeker has to go the right way about it:

What greater fool can there be than a person who, having obtained a rare human body, . . . neglects to achieve the real purpose of this life? Let people quote the scriptures and sacrifice to the gods; let them perform rituals and worship deities: there is no liberation (*mukti*) without realization of one's identity with the *Ātman* (Self), no, not even in the lifetime of a hundred *Brahmās* put together. . . .

A disease does not go away simply by uttering the name of the medicine without taking it: one cannot attain liberation (*mukti*) by merely uttering the word '*Brahman*' without direct realization. . . .

Seeking to realize the Self by devotion to bodily nourishment is like trying to cross a river by catching hold of a crocodile, mistaking it for a log. So for a seeker of liberation (*mumukshu*), identification with objects such as the body is a dire death. Only he who has thoroughly conquered this deserves the state of freedom (*muktipada*). . . .

O foolish man, cease identifying yourself with this bundle of skin, flesh, bones, and filth; identify yourself instead with the absolute *Brahman*, the Self in all, and thus attain supreme peace.

As long as the book-learned man does not give up his mistaken identification with his body organs, and so on, which are unreal, there is no question of emancipation (*vimukti*) for him, though he be ever so erudite in *Vedānta* philosophy. . . .



Sages who have fathomed its secret have designated the mind as *avidyā* (ignorance), by which alone the universe is moved to and fro, like clouds by the wind. Therefore the seeker of liberation (*mumukshu*) must carefully purify the mind. When this is purified, liberation (*mukti*) is as easy to obtain as holding a fruit on the palm of one's hand....

So long as one has any relationship with this wicked ego, there can be no question of liberation (*mukti*)....

When selfish action comes to an end, brooding on sense objects ceases, followed by the destruction of desires. The destruction of desires is liberation (*moksha*), and this is regarded as liberation while living (*jīvanmukti*)....

Relinquishing thought of the not-Self, which is impure and the cause of suffering, dwell on the Self, the bliss absolute, which leads to liberation (*mukti*).

*Shankara, Vivekachūḍāmaṇi* 5–6, 62, 84–85, 161–62, 180–81, 299, 317, 379;

*cf. VCSM pp.* 3, 22, 31, 61–62, 70, 114, 120, 144

The most essential factor, says the *Haṭha Yoga Pradīpikā* is the need of someone who can show the way:

Complete insight into the essence of *rāja yoga*, *jñāna* (realization, wisdom), *mukti* (liberation), *sthiti* (natural state, *sahaj avasthā*), and *siddhi* (perfection) can be attained only by instruction from a *guru*.

*Haṭha Yoga Pradīpikā* 4:8, HPSD p.130

In traditional Hindu philosophy, *mukti* is associated with the realization of *Brahman*. According to some Indian *sants*, however, *mukti pad* refers to an inner region they call *daswān dwār* (tenth door), *sunṇ* (void) or *parbrahm* (beyond *Brahm*), a realm above the causal plane of universal mind. They identify the universal mind with *Brahm* or *Brahman*, adding that there are regions of pure spirit beyond this, leading up to the divine Source Itself. They maintain that the soul can only ascend beyond the mind through a force that also comes from beyond the mind, and can only reach God through a power that comes directly from God. They say that this force or power is the divine Word or *Shabd*.<sup>1</sup>

The process begins by withdrawing the consciousness from the nine openings of the body (eyes, ears, nostrils, mouth, and the two lower openings) to the eye centre, and then traversing the astral and causal realms. Hence Maharaj Charan Singh writes:

Withdrawing our attention from the nine apertures (of the body) and connecting it with the *Shabd* within leads us to the door of *mukti*. For, when we have reached the first rung of the ladder, there is hope of reaching the top as well. The secret of withdrawing the attention

from the nine apertures, and the technique of connecting it with the *Shabd* is imparted to us only by the saints.

*Maharaj Charan Singh, Light on Sant Mat, Discourses 3, LOSM p.29*

Swami Shiv Dayal Singh speaks specifically of the ascent from the third eye (the “*til*”), through the great “flame (*jotī*)” of *sahans dal kanwal*, through the crooked tunnel (“*bunk nāl*”), up to the sky (“*gagan*”) of *trikuṭī*, and thence to the *sun*n realm or “tenth door (*dasm duār*)”, where the soul, bathing in the lake (“*sarovar*”) of the nectar of immortality, knows itself as pure soul and attains *mukti*:

Focus your (inner) sight and hearing,  
and pierce through the sky of the *til*;  
Gaze at the beauty of the flame (*jotī*),  
and pass through the door of *bunk nāl*.  
Listening to the Unstruck (*Anhad*) (Sound),  
lift your attention up to *gagan*;  
See the moon in the realm of *sun*n,  
behold the white and radiant light in *dasm duār*.  
There, bathing in *sarovar* attain liberation (*mukti*),  
erase all traces of *karma*,  
and hear the strains of the *kingrī*.

*Swami Shiv Dayal Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 33:3.19–20, SBP p.265*

Guru Amardās, referring to the Hindu trinity as personifications of the three *guṇas* (attributes) that originate from the realm of *Brahman*, says that even these great deities have not attained *mukti*:

I have considered *Brahmā*, *Vishṇu*, and *Mahesh* (*Shiva*):  
they are bound by the three *guṇas*.  
They are far away from liberation (*mukat*).

*Guru Amardās, Ādi Granth 1049, AGK*

He also says that in the end, *mukti* is all a matter of divine grace:

That person whom the Lord forgives is united with Him:  
he finds eternal peace, here and hereafter.  
Says Nānak, what can anyone do?  
He alone is liberated (*mukat*),  
whom the Lord blesses with His grace.

*Guru Amardās, Ādi Granth 1261, AGK*

The two essential factors, writes Guru Amardās, are the divine Word or Name and the *guru*:

The *gurmukhs* are awake,  
 contemplating spiritual wisdom and the glory of God.  
 Those humble beings who love the *Nām* are awake and aware:  
 one who is awake to this intuitive wisdom does not fall asleep.  
 How rare are those humble beings who understand this  
 through the perfect *guru*. . .  
 O Nānak, without the *Nām* (Name), no one is liberated (*mukat*).

*Guru Amardās, Ādi Granth 160–61, AGK*

In Jainism, although *mukti* is the spiritual ideal, the two main schools disagree on a number of issues. Contrary to the *Shvetāmbaras* (clad in white), *Digambaras* (sky clad) maintain that liberation is only possible if all possessions are renounced, including the use of clothes. Since nudity is not permitted for women, *Digambaras* believe that only men can attain liberation. The subject remains a matter of debate, however, and some, such as the Jain scholar and poet Shrī Nyāyavijayajī (1890–1970), point out that being either naked or clothed is no obstacle to liberation. What makes a difference is detachment from the world:

*Shvetāmbara* and *Digambara* Jains are the strong supporters and propagators of *anekāntavāda* (many-sidedness, doctrine of open-mindedness). Why then should they disagree as to whether or not nudity is necessary for the attainment of salvation? . . .

Does yogic practice, the supreme means for the attainment of liberation (*mukti*), fail to result in liberation (*mukti*) if the practitioner is without clothing? Does the absence of clothing prevent the state of liberation (*mukti*) from manifesting itself? No, not at all. The essential point is that when one attains the state of perfect non-attachment, one definitely attains liberation, irrespective of whether or not one is naked.

*Shrī Nyāyavijayajī, Anekānta-vibhūti 16, 19; cf. in JPRN p.393*

Shrī Nyāyavijayajī adds:

There is no harm in one's being known by this or that sect name. But if someone thinks that practice of nudity is the sole condition of liberation, or that the practice of wearing particular pieces of cloth is the sole condition of liberation (*mukti*), or that metaphysical speculation or logic-chopping is the means of liberation (*mukti*), or that philosophical debate leads to liberation (*mukti*), or that service of bigotry is the cause of liberation (*mukti*), then such views are all wrong and pernicious to spiritual welfare or liberation (*mukti*). In fact, freedom from passions (attachment, aversion, and infatuation) is the real spiritual freedom.

*Shrī Nyāyavijayajī, Jaina Philosophy and Religion; cf. JPRN p.425*

As the Jain *Sambodha-saptati* summarizes:

Be he a white-cotton clad or a sky clad, a Buddhist or any other, he who is free of passions and is possessed of equanimity will certainly attain liberation (Pk. *mukkha*).

*Sambodha-saptati* 2; cf. in *JPRN* p.150

See also: **jīvanmukti**, **kaivalya**, **moksha**, **nirvāṇa**.

1. See **Brahman** (2.1), **parbrahm** (4.1).

**mūla-vijñāna** (S) *Lit.* root (*mūla*) consciousness (*vijñāna*); a concept of the *Mahāsāṃghika* school of Buddhism, a precursor of *Mahāyāna* Buddhism and the *Yogāchāra* school; understood as the foundational consciousness that serves as the root or support of the six forms of sensory consciousness (six senses plus the mind), just as the roots of a tree support the leaves; regarded as the forerunner of the *Yogāchāra* notion of storehouse consciousness (*ālaya-vijñāna*), which is understood as the continuum of consciousness underlying all moments of existence in this life, linking the present life with the next, and providing the ground for the other forms of consciousness (*vijñāna*).

See also: **ālaya-vijñāna**, **vijñāna**.

**mushāhadah** (A), **mushāhadat** (P) *Lit.* witnessing, seeing, perceiving; contemplation, contemplative vision, visionary experience; from the same root as and synonymous with *shuhūd*. *Mushāhadah* is used for all levels of contemplation of the inner realities, from the earliest stages to the contemplation of the divine Essence Itself:

In the beginning, contemplative vision (*mushāhadah*) involves faith and belief in the presence of God's Essence in everything. . . . Ultimately, it involves continuous direct observation (*mu'āyanah*) of the presence of God's Essence.

*Shāh Ni'mat Allāh Valī, Rasā'il, RNV4 p.181*

To perceive everything through the light of oneness – to perceive the oneness in things with certitude and without the shadow of a doubt is called contemplative vision (*mushāhadah*).

*Shāh Ni'mat Allāh Valī, Rasā'il, RNV2 p.385*

From the point of view of the wayfarers, contemplative vision (*mushāhadah*) means the vision (*ru'yah*) of God through the eye of the heart.

*Tahānawī, Kashshāf Iṣṭilāḥāt al-Funūn, KIFT2 p.474; cf. in SSE7 p.69*

Contemplative vision (*mushāhadah*) means direct vision (*'iyān*) of God with the eye of the spirit.

*Rūzbihān, Sharḥ-i Shaṭḥiyāt 391:1078, CPS p.557; cf. in SSE7 p.69*

Ibn al-ʿArabī, together with many other Sufis, says that in the ascent of the soul, there are many stages (*manāzil*) of *mushāhadah* itself.<sup>1</sup> The works of Niffārī suggest a progression from *'ilm* (outer knowledge), through *ma'rifah* (gnosis), to *mushāhadah* (contemplative vision).<sup>2</sup> Al-Qushayrī similarly considers *mushāhadah* to be the third stage of spiritual evolution after attendance (*muḥāḍarah*) and unveiling (*mukāshafah*). He describes these stages as a growing inner “presence”, implying an increasingly deep awareness of one’s own inner being – of presence or focus within oneself:

Attendance (*muḥāḍarah*) comes at the beginning, then unveiling (*al-mukāshafah*), then contemplative vision (*mushāhadah*). Attendance (*muḥāḍarah*) refers to the presence of the heart, which can occur through continued proof (*burhān*).

At first, you find yourself behind the veil, even if you are present through the strength of the power of remembrance. After that comes unveiling (*mukāshafah*), which is a presence occurring through the attribute of lucidity (*naʿt al-bayān*). It has no need for meditating upon proofs or for seeking the path (intellectually), or for taking refuge from the causes of doubt or being veiled from the attribute of the unknown.

Then there is contemplative vision (*mushāhadah*), which is the presence of the Real without any doubt. When the heaven of the heart-servant is clear of the clouds of the veiling, then the sun of contemplative vision (*mushāhadah*) shines down from the star-mansions of nobility.

*Al-Qushayrī, Risālah, RQQQ p.43; cf. in EIM p.131*

Sufis discussed at length whether *mushāhadah* was the result of *mujāhadah* (self-mortification) or the reverse.<sup>3</sup> That is, whether inner visions prompted an individual to purify themselves, or whether self-purification resulted in inner visions.

See also: **baṣar al-baṣīrah** (8.2), **ḥawāss** (8.2), **mujāhadah** (►4), **murāqabah** (8.5), **naẓar** (8.2).

1. Ibn al-‘Arabī, *Meccan Revelations* 2:601.18, *FMIA*4 (4:277) p.345, *SPK* p.226.
2. See Michael Sells, *Early Islamic Mysticism*, *EIM* p.283.
3. E.g. in Hujwīrī, *Kashf al-Mahjūb* IV, VII, XI, XII, XIV, XVIII, XXI, XXII, XXIV, *KMM* pp.52, 78, 117, 140, 158, 212, 218, 226, 229, 244, 252, 381, 421, 427, 498, *KM* pp.47, 70, 95, 113, 127, 170, 176, 182, 184, 195, 201, 296, 325, 329, 382.

**muskalot** (He) *Lit.* concepts, meanings, objective truths; in Kabbalism, spiritual realities; levels of spiritual understanding; also translated as ‘intelligibles’, implying levels of spiritual consciousness.

The fourteenth-century kabbalist Isaac of Akko insisted that, in order to rise above the limitations of bodily existence, a kabbalist must transcend the realm of physical sensations (*murgashot*) and attach his mind to the spiritual realities (*muskalot*). By subduing and transforming the *murgashot*, it is possible to become attached to the *muskalot*. Attachment to the *muskalot* leads to experience of spiritual contemplation free from the downward pull of the body. This implies “a mode of mystical perception in which physical sensation is replaced by an interior, spiritualized vision of being.”<sup>1</sup> In order to reach the climax of the devotee’s connection to Divinity, the contemplative act of training the mind and contemplating the divine *muskalot* is necessary. It is in this way that Isaac of Akko, interprets a verse from the *Psalms* that was in his mind one day on awakening from sleep, “The heavens belong to the Lord (*Yahweh*), but the earth He gave over to humans”:<sup>2</sup>

And in the state of being asleep but not asleep (*nim ve-lo nim*), I saw that the meaning of this verse is that ... the “heavens” allude to the *muskalot* (spiritual realities) and the “earth” alludes to the corporeal (physical), sensate dimensions (*murgashot*).

*Isaac of Akko, Oẓar Ḥayyim, OHIA fol.158b–59a; cf. LBDF p.107*

Isaac also writes that the secret of “consumption” in the fire of divine love is *devekut*, together with the pursuit and grasping of *muskalot*:

I, the young one, Isaac from Akko, went to hear the blessing of circumcision, and (while there) I saw the secret of the fire that consumes fire... And the secret of this consumption is true *devekut*... If you pursue the *muskalot* (spiritual realities) and grasp them, if they are held and engraved in (your soul) – then this is certainly the secret of consumption.

*Isaac of Akko, Oẓar Ḥayyim, OHIA fol.111a; cf. in LBDF p.281*

See also: **devekut**, **nim ve-lo nim**, **sha‘arei ‘olam** (8.2).

1. Eitan Fishbane, *As Light Before Dawn*, LBDF p.249.
2. *Psalms* 115:16.

**mystical experience** Experience of a higher level of consciousness; an experience of a reality higher than that known through the physical senses and the normal faculties of the human mind; an experience of divine mysteries; a touch of God; also called spiritual experience.

The word ‘mystic’ originates in the ancient Mediterranean mystery religions. It comes from the Greek *mystikos*, from *mystēs* (initiate of the mysteries), from *myein* (to close the eyes or lips, to keep the secret of the mysteries); related to *mystagōgos* (mystagogue, one who initiates others into the mysteries).

Outer human experience is based upon what is known through the five physical senses, while a person’s ‘inner’ experience of himself is normally limited to a hazy perception of mental and emotional processes whose origins are largely buried in the subconscious. Thus, human knowledge and understanding normally consist of thoughts and emotions engendered by sensory or material experiences.

Mystic experience is an experience of that which lies beyond the senses, and beyond the human mind and its various faculties. Those who have had even a glimpse of such an experience generally report that it leaves them with a sense of the unreality of the material world, which subsequently seems to be no more than a realm of shadows, reflections, and mirages. To the one who has known it, mystic experience carries with it its own touchstone of validity and is more real than the normal human state of wakefulness. But to those who have no inklings or feelings for it, it remains a matter to be explained away or ignored.

According to Plato (c.427–347 BCE), mystical experience, not reason and intellectual analysis, is the hallmark of the true philosopher or mystic (a *thyrsus* being a staff, an emblem of one initiated into the mysteries):

For, as they say in the mysteries, “The *thyrsus*-bearers are many, but the mystics (*bacchants*) are few,” meaning, as I understand it, “the true philosophers”.

*Plato, Phaedo* 69c–d, *DPI* pp.420–21

In Plato’s case, his philosophical works are clearly permeated with the certainty and intuition that come with mystical experience:

The certainty that he (Plato) possesses is the same as that of the mystics, it rests upon facts of experience, upon a unique and individual intuition. It is mystical experience that has given rise to Platonic philosophy.

*A.M.J. Festugière; cf. in The Shape of Ancient Thought, SATM* p.195

Mystics express themselves from the direct experience of an expanded consciousness; intellectuals remain bound to reason, logic, and the meaning of words. In the last work of his old age, *The Laws*, Plato maintains that human beings are the puppets of God, and that there is an urgent need to apply oneself with diligence to the only serious business in life, namely to knowing God.<sup>1</sup> He also speaks of “having caught a glimpse of the Divine (*theon apidōn*), and having experienced (*pathōn*) It”.<sup>2</sup>

Aristotle (384–322 BCE), a pupil of Plato, observes that the experiences of initiates in the mysteries illustrate that there is a way of knowing the Divine that is founded upon interior experience, without reliance upon learning of any kind. He adds, however, that a person needs to be inwardly prepared for such an experience:

Those who are being initiated (into the mysteries) are not required to grasp anything with their intelligence (*mathein*), but to have a certain inner experience (*pathein*), and so to enter a particular frame of mind, having first been prepared for it.

*Aristotle, Fragment 15 (Rose); cf. AFHD p.160, SKDC pp.28–29*

The fourth-century Christian bishop and Neoplatonist, Synesius of Cyrene, refers to this passage from Aristotle in a discussion concerning the two types of mystical experience: one that happens gradually with the help of a method or practice (*logos*), and one that occurs spontaneously without any preparation or method. Describing the latter, he writes:

That which happens to them is like a bacchic frenzy, like an insane and fanatical dance. They attain their goal without running the race, passing beyond reason (*logos*) without the previous exercise of any practice (*logos*).

*Synesius of Cyrene, Dion Chrysostomos 48a, SKDC pp.28–29; cf. EHS1 p.163*

But he warns that the experience is unsustainable, and the fall from such a sudden ascent is equally abrupt:

For these people, their descent . . . is immediate and extensive, resembling a fall just as their ascent can be compared to a leap.

*Synesius of Cyrene, Dion Chrysostomos 48a, EHS1 p.164, SKDC pp.28–29*

Plato observes, however, that although realization may be sudden, it is built on long and arduous practice, and arises from contact with a mystic. He also says that he has never written anything concerning the deeper aspects of mysticism, for the matter cannot be adequately conveyed in words:



No treatise by me concerning it exists or ever will exist. For it does not admit of verbal expression like other branches of learning; but, as a result of a life lived with continued application to the subject itself, it arises suddenly in a soul, like a light (*phōs*) kindled by a flame that leaps to it from another; and once lit it sustains itself thereafter.

*Plato, Letters VII:341c-d; cf. PTCC pp.530–31*

Writing several centuries later, Plotinus (c.205–270 CE) describes his own mystical experiences most vividly:

Many times it has happened: awakening from the body into myself; entering into the self, leaving behind all other things; beholding a marvellous Beauty; then, more than ever, assured of communion with the loftiest part; living the best life, acquiring identity with the Divine. Established firmly within It, I have come to that supreme Reality, being established within myself above all else in the realm of the spirit (*nous*).

*Plotinus, Enneads 4:8.1; cf. PA4 pp.396–97, PEC p.200*

Plotinus' description of the mystical experience is of entering more deeply into oneself. The experience is that of boundless, formless, infinite love (*erōs amētos*),<sup>3</sup> "like that of a lover resting in the beloved".<sup>4</sup> It is beyond description:

Those to whom this experience is strange may understand it by way of our earthly loves, and the joy we have in attaining what we most desire – remembering always that these earthly loves are perishable and harmful, and that our loving is only an imitation, and turns awry because it is not what we really and truly love, nor is it for our good, nor what we really seek.

*Plotinus, Enneads 6:9.9; cf. PA7 pp.336–39, PEC p.359*

Plotinus also describes two kinds of mystical experience. One is being swept away and possessed by love, the other is sober contemplation:

The spirit (*nous*) has one power for perception (*noein*), by which it looks at the things within itself, and one by which it looks at what transcends itself by a direct awareness (*epibolē*) and receptivity (*paradochē*), becoming one with that. And that first one is the contemplation of the spirit (*nous*) in its right mind (*emphrōn*), and the other is the spirit (*nous*) in love, when it goes out of its mind drunk with the nectar; then it falls in love, simplified by having its fill of blissful experience (*eupatheia*); and it is better for it to be drunk with a drunkenness like this than to be more respectably sober.

*Plotinus, Enneads 6:7.34; cf. PA7 pp.196–97, PEC (35) p.339*

Among Christian writers of recent times, Thomas Kelly (1893–1941), like Synesius, observes that mystical experience normally arises as the result of dedicated spiritual practice, but may also arise spontaneously, even in those who have never given thought to the possibility of such things:

Some men come into holy obedience through the gateway of profound mystical experience. It is an overwhelming experience to fall into the hands of the living God, to be invaded to the depths of one's being by His presence, to be, without warning, wholly uprooted from all earth-born securities and assurances, and to be blown by a tempest of unbelievable power that leaves one's old proud self utterly, utterly defenceless, until one cries, "All Thy waves and Thy billows are gone over me."<sup>5</sup> Then is the soul swept into a Loving Centre of ineffable sweetness, where calm and unspeakable peace and ravishing joy steal over one.

*Thomas Kelly, Testament of Devotion, TDK p.30*

The extent to which human consciousness can be expanded is such that many mystics have said that it can become one with the consciousness or being of the all-inclusive, divine Oneness or universal Consciousness, outside of which nothing exists. According to the degree of expansion or ascent, the mystic experiences an infused knowledge and understanding, a gnosis in which are revealed all the secret or hidden processes by which things come about in this world and in the higher reaches of creation. The mystic sees and hears on the inner planes and perceives things directly within the mind, or – beyond the mind – in the soul alone. Such experiences are the substance of all religious, revelational, and prophetic experiences. This is what Jesus is referring to in *Matthew* when he says:

But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear.  
For verily I say unto you, that many prophets and righteous men have  
desired to see those things which you see, and have not seen them;  
and to hear those things which you hear, and have not heard them.

*Matthew 13:16–17; cf. KJV*

He means that his disciples have had mystic experiences that many aspiring seekers on the spiritual path have longed for, but have not experienced. This saying, found in a number of forms, is quoted by St Paul,<sup>6</sup> and commonly occurs in the mystic literature of Jesus' times, as in the *Gospel of Thomas*:

Jesus said:

"I shall give you what no eye has seen,  
and what no ear has heard,

and what no hand has touched,  
and what has never occurred to the human mind.”

*Gospel of Thomas 36:17, NHS20 pp.60–61*

Interestingly, echoes of the same saying are found in the Mandaean texts:

You have shown us that which the eye of man has not seen,  
and caused us to hear that which the human ear has not heard.  
You have freed us from death and united us with Life,  
released us from darkness and united us with Light,  
led us out of evil and joined us to the Good.

You have shown us the Way of Life  
and have guided our feet into ways of truth<sup>7</sup> and faith  
so that Life comes and expels darkness  
and Goodness comes and casts out evil.

*Mandaean Prayer Book 45; cf. CPM p.41*

Advanced mystics who are able to speak from personal experience point to the practical path by which others may enjoy the same experiences, rather than spinning out intellectual systems and philosophies. This is Jesus’ meaning when he says:

Truly, truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know, and testify of what we have seen; and you do not accept our witness. If I have told you of earthly things, and you believe not, how will you believe if I tell you of heavenly things?

*John 3:11–12; cf. KJV*

The words are echoed by Paul in his letter to the *Romans*:

We look not at the things that are seen, but at the things that are not seen. For the things that are seen are temporal; but the things that are not seen are eternal.

*Romans 4:17–18; cf. KJV*

In its highest form, mystic experience is the direct knowledge of God. This involves extinction of the ego, self or individuality, identification with the Divine in everything, and a sense of freedom and of being beyond space and time. Integral to this experience is an ineffable love for the Creator and all His creation. Some mystics, as in Christianity, although they speak of union with God, have nonetheless stressed that there is a permanent distinction between the Creator and the created. Others, such as the Sufis, maintain that

the union is complete when the devotee is in a state of utter self-surrender and rapture. The two approaches may appear irreconcilable, but it is probable that the difference is due to linguistics, to the prevailing belief system, or to the stage that a particular mystic has reached. The higher mystics speak of God as being both immanent and transcendent.

A further theme running throughout the world's mystical traditions is that of the divine Word or creative power, known by many names and described in many ways, as the most effective path to God, travelled with the help of a mystic who has himself reached the goal by this means. Explicitly or through parables, mystics speak of the Word of God into which only a perfect master can initiate a seeker and which alone can lead to salvation and true mystical experience.

In the later Christian tradition, mystical experiences are commonly known as visions or revelations, and – like many such experiences – generally reflect the beliefs and temperament of the mystic or visionary. Mystical experiences can be varied. The fourteenth-century Flemish mystic, Jan van Ruysbroek, attempts to classify the various kinds of mystical experience known to Christian devotees – to those, he says, who dwell in the “tempest” of love and longing. Some, he writes, hear voices or have visions of a symbolic nature, such as the fantastical visions of the thirteenth-century Flemish mystic, Hadewijch, whose visions bear a resemblance to those of the biblical Ezekiel:<sup>8</sup>

Out of this tempest and impatience, men are sometimes drawn up in the spirit above their senses, and some truth is spoken to them in words or shown to them in images or likenesses, which is needful to them, or to other men, or to the times that are yet to come. This is called revelation or vision.

*Jan van Ruysbroek, Spiritual Espousals 2:11; cf. SER p.107*

Visions of a seemingly physical nature may in fact be experienced through the faculty of imagination, induced, he maintains, by an angel:

If they are corporeal images, man apprehends them in his imagination. This indeed an angel achieves in man through the power of God.

*Jan van Ruysbroek, Spiritual Espousals 2:11, SER p.107*

Other experiences manifest as an infusion of deep understanding:

If it is some comprehensible truth or some spiritual likeness whereby God manifests Himself in all His profundity, then man apprehends it in his understanding, and he is able to reproduce it in words insofar as man has words for it.

*Jan van Ruysbroek, Spiritual Espousals 2:11, SER p.107*

At times, the soul is carried away in the spirit and experiences things that are utterly beyond description:

Sometimes man can be drawn above himself and above the spirit, but not in every respect outside himself, into an incomprehensible richness that he can never again find words for, or describe in the way that he heard and saw it: for in this pure experience and this pure vision, to hear and to see are one and the same. And no one can achieve this in man except God alone, without means and without the co-operation of any creature. This is called rapture, which is the same as saying ‘carried off by force’ or ‘overpowered’.

*Jan van Ruysbroek, Spiritual Espousals 2:11; cf. SER p.107*

Sometimes, a glimpse of divine light is given:

Sometimes, God gives to such men a brief glimpse in the spirit like lightning in heaven, so to speak. In this case, a brief glimpse of a peculiar clarity is manifest, and it shines forth from pure nakedness (of being), and so in the twinkling of an eye the spirit is exalted above itself, and then immediately the light is gone, and the man returns to himself. God Himself performs this, and it is most excellent, because men are often enlightened by it.

Sometimes, these men who live in the tempest of love have another kind of experience, for sometimes there shines in them a pure light, and this God performs in various ways. In this light, their hearts ascend towards the light, according to the intensity of their yearning. And in this meeting with the light, the delight and the satisfaction is so great that the heart cannot endure it, but with joy bursts out in one cry: and this is called jubilation, which is to say a joy that cannot be told in words. And if a man with an upright and open heart meets with the light, he cannot endure it, but will continue to cry aloud for as long as the experience lasts. Such inward men are instructed in dreams by means of their guardian angels or of other angels, and at such times learn of many things that are helpful to them.

*Jan van Ruysbroek, Spiritual Espousals 2:11; cf. SER p.108*

Other souls may “have fancies”, hear “inward voices” or be impressed by powerful thoughts, but because they are not rapt in divine love, their experiences, he says, may be deceptions. The veracity of the experience is to be judged by measuring it against “holy scripture and the truth”:

One also finds such men who have fancies or inward voices or thoughts, and who yet remain in their external senses; and they dream marvellous things, yet they know nothing of the tempest of love,

because they are manifold (*i.e.* scattered in many things) and are not wounded by love. This may come by way of nature, or from the devil, or from a man's good angel. And one may esteem this as highly as it resembles holy scripture and the truth, and no more: if one wishes to hold it in higher esteem, one may very easily be deceived.

*Jan van Ruysbroek, Spiritual Espousals 2:11; cf. SER p.108*

Many other mystics have described their experiences, as best they could. It was related, for instance, of the Rhineland mystic, Blessed Hermann Joseph of Steinfield (c.1150–1241):

Once when Brother Joseph was buried in these meditations, he stood at night at the window of the sacristy and gazed at the rising moon and stars. And a great longing seized him that he might see creation as it is in the eyes of God; so he said to the Creator: "O dear Lord, Creator of all things, although, so long as I remain here in Babylon (this world of exile from God), I can only see You dimly through a glass, yet will You give me such a knowledge of Your creation, by which I may know and love You better."

And as he stood there praying, he was suddenly raised above himself in such a wonderful manner, that he could not afterwards account for it, and the Lord revealed to him the whole beauty and glory of the firmament and of every created thing, so that his longing was fully satisfied. But afterwards, when he came to himself, the prior could get nothing out of him except that he had received such an unspeakable rapture from his perfect knowledge of creation that it was beyond human understanding.

*Life of Hermann Joseph (Bolland); cf. in GIP p.278*

Marina de Escobar (1554–1633) describes the effect of a heavenly vision in which her spirit had left her body:

When back in my cell I found myself wholly changed. . . . It seemed as though my soul were no longer wholly in my body, but that the superior part had remained in those heights, inebriated, plunged in the vision of God's supreme perfections, and that I retained the inferior part, that which gives life to the senses and bodily faculties only.

*Marina de Escobar, VME2 1:47, in GIP p.276*

Teresa of Ávila (1515–1582), in her simple way, writes of the extraordinary understanding she receives in a moment of divine grace:

When our Lord suspends the understanding and makes it cease from its activity (when the mind is made motionless), He puts before it that which astonishes it and occupies it; so that without making

any reflections (without reasoning), it comprehends in a moment more than we could comprehend in many years, with all the efforts in the world.

*Teresa of Ávila, Life 12:8; cf. LSTJ p.92*

And again:

In an instant, the mind learns so many things at once that if the imagination and intellect spent years in trying to enumerate them, it would be impossible to recall a thousandth part of them. . . . Although no words are pronounced, the spirit is taught many truths.

*Teresa of Ávila, Interior Castle 6:5.8–9, ICM pp.202–3*

And confirming that such experiences are utterly beyond the sensory and bodily faculties, she writes:

There appear to me two things in this spiritual state (the longing to see God) that might endanger life. One is that of which I have just spoken (the inward anguish of spiritual longing); . . . the other is an excessive gladness and delight, so extreme that the soul appears to swoon away and seems on the verge of leaving the body, which indeed would bring it no small joy.

*Teresa of Ávila, Interior Castle 5:11.11; cf. in GIP p.266, ICM p.259*

See also: **light** (8.2), **mystic** (7.1), **Mysticism** (1.1), **revelations**, **union with God**, **visions**.

1. Plato, *Laws* 7:803c–d.
2. Plato, *Laws* 7:804b.
3. Plotinus, *Enneads* 6:7.32.
4. Plotinus, *Enneads* 6:9.4, *PA7* pp.316–17.
5. *Psalms* 42:7, *KJV*.
6. *1 Corinthians* 2:9.
7. *Cf. Luke* 1:79; see also *John* 16:13.
8. *Ezekiel* 1:1–25.

**mystical theology** See **theology**.

**nafs al-qiddīṣah** (A), **nafs-i qiddīṣah** (P) *Lit.* sanctified (*qiddīṣah*) mind (*nafs*); the sanctified *nafs*; a purified state of mind attained by the practice of a form of *dhikr* (remembrance, recitation) taught in the *Naqshbandīyah* Sufi order. The practice begins by concentrating the attention successively at each of

five different subtle centres (*laṭāʾif*) in the chest, from where the purified and concentrated *nafs* – the *nafs al-qiddīṣah* – is brought up to a centre in the head, where *dhikr nafsī* is practised in perfect peace and contentment. When this contentment and peace permeates the whole being, and the practitioner attains perfect recollection, the repetition becomes known as *dhikr sulṭānī* (royal *dhikr*).<sup>1</sup>

See also: **dhikr** (8.5).

1. See Annmarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, MDI pp.174–75.

**najāh** (A), **najāṭ** (P) *Lit.* escape, freedom, rescue, salvation, deliverance; in Sufi terms, deliverance from the wiles of Satan and the *nafs* (lower mind), together with mystic experience of a high degree:

Whenever God desires a good life for the sincere mystic, He binds his *nafs* to the rope of serenity, driving Satan out of his breast with the arrows of zeal... Then God removes the world and the creation and all therein from the mystic's consciousness, so that he only tolerates these as being transitory things. Then God purges the mystic's inner consciousness from the distraction of transitory things and keeps him from slackness, guiding him to the clearest ways of contemplation, making him near to Him... He shows the mystic as much of Himself as He desires him to see. He does not cut the mystic off for a single moment from access to Him or from intimacy in communion with Him or from the pleasures of witnessing Him. These are the ultimate instances of His salvation (*najāh*).

As the *Qur'ān* says (speaking of Moses), "And We saved you from distress and tried you severely."<sup>1</sup> Or as the *Qur'ān* describes God's deliverance of Job from his trials into the contemplation of Himself and into nearness to and intimacy with Himself, "And We removed the adversity that was upon him and restored his household to him..."<sup>2</sup> Or as the *Qur'ān* says concerning Jonah, God, "saved him (*najjaynāhu*) from anguish".<sup>3</sup>

Al-ʿArif (the gnostic, al-Ḥallāj) said: "Salvation (*najāh*) from God can come only through Him. The basis of salvation (*najāh*) is deliverance from ignorance into gnosis."

*Rūzbihān, Mashrab al-Arwāḥ* 3:50, MARB p.62; cf. in SSE5 p.107–8

The Indian Sufi, Ināyat Khān, defines *najāṭ* as going beyond the material world and following the mystic Sound until its end is reached:



The ‘abstract’ is that existence beyond this world where existence commingles, where it all meets. The Sound of the Abstract is there, and when that Sound is silenced too and a person goes beyond it, he reaches the highest state, *najāt*, the eternal consciousness. Of course, a great effort is needed to attain to that state.

*‘Ināyat Khān, Sufi Message, SMIK8e p.76*

Using a verb form of the term, Ḥāfiẓ says that he was saved by the “Water of Life”, the divine creative power:

Last night, in the pre-dawn,  
they saved me (*najātam dādand*);  
And, in the darkness of the night,  
gave me the Water of Life (*Āb-i Ḥayāt*). . .  
The moment the lover fell into the snare of Your tresses,  
he said, “They have given me freedom (*najāt*)  
from bondage to trouble and suffering.” . . .  
It was the inner attention (*himmat*) of Ḥāfiẓ  
and the breath of risers in the early morn  
that gave me freedom (*najāt*) from the chains of time’s sufferings.

*Ḥāfiẓ, Dīvān, DHA pp.78–79, DHM (169:1, 11, 13) p.178,*

*DIH p.149; cf. DHWC (218:1, 12, 14) pp.400–1*

And Maghribī captures the yearning of all devotees:

Since You have cared for and caressed me,  
do not kill me with longing!  
I am ready for salvation (*najāt*),  
not destruction!

*Maghribī, Dīvān 117:1139, DSMR p.160; cf. in SSE5 p.109*

1. *Qur’ān* 20:40.
2. *Qur’ān* 21:84.
3. *Qur’ān* 21:88.

**ñāṇa-dassana** (Pa), **jñāna-darshana** (S) *Lit.* knowledge (*jñāna*) and vision (*darshana*); knowledge that sees, directly perceived knowledge; gnosis and inner vision; direct personal vision and awareness of the inner truths of the spiritual path, which supplants all reasoned, intellectual and conceptual knowledge; inner gnosis and understanding of Buddhist principles, notably of the four noble truths concerning the existence and surmounting of suffering (*duḥkha*), and the three characteristics (*trilakṣaṇa*) of existence, viz. impermanence

(*anitya*), suffering (*duḥkha*), and lack of a permanent, independent identity (*anātman*). Associated expressions include *vimutti-ñāṇa-dassana* (knowledge and gnosis of liberation), which leads to complete extinction (*parinibbāna*);<sup>1</sup> and *yathābhūta-ñāṇa-dassana* (knowledge and vision that accords with reality, correct knowledge and vision, seeing things as they really are), which is the fifteenth in Buddhaghosa's list of the eighteen principle insights (*vipassanās*),<sup>2</sup> and which again leads to the apprehension of Reality.

The *Samādhi Bhāvanā Sutta* of the *Anguttara Nikāya* says that *ñāṇa-dassana* can be developed by the cultivation of concentration (*samādhi bhāvanā*) through meditation on the perception of light (*āloka-saññā*). The practice to which the passage is referring is probably that of taking an *āloka kaṣiṇa* (illuminated object) as the subject or focus for meditation, a form of meditation that is said to develop the divine eye (*dibba-cakkhu*) or inner vision.<sup>3</sup>

*Ñāṇa-dassana* is attained when a meditator, having overcome the five hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*, i.e. ill will, mental laziness, etc.) and attained the degree of concentration (*samādhi*) required to enter the fourth *jhāna* (level of meditative absorption) – which corresponds to the highest level of *rūpaloka* (world of forms, patterns, or archetypes) – focuses his attention on the inner faculty of *ñāṇa-dassana*, and acquires *yathābhūta-ñāṇa-dassana* (seeing things as they really are).

According to the *Sāmaññaphala Sutta* of the *Dīgha Nikāya*, when a meditator has entered the fourth *jhāna*, “with mind (*citta*) concentrated, purified and cleansed, unblemished, free from impurities (*upakkilesa*), malleable, workable, established, and – having gained imperturbability – directs and inclines his mind towards knowing and seeing (*ñāṇa-dassana*)”, then he truly realizes the transient and material nature of the body, made of the material elements (*bhūtas*), to which his consciousness (*viññāna*) is attached. Then, from that material body arises “another body, made of mind (*manomaya-kāya*) and fully functional, just as a man draws out a reed from its sheath, ... or a sword from a scabbard, ... or a snake from its old skin”. This is the subtle or astral body that functions in *rūpaloka*. The *Sāmaññaphala Sutta* then continues with a description of the various supernormal powers the meditator has now acquired from this elevation of consciousness. Together with a description of the ascent through the *jhānas*, the description is given as part of a response to the question, “What is the fruit of the contemplative life (*sāmaññaphala*)?”<sup>4</sup>

The Pali *Abhidhamma* texts, which take a more analytical and intellectual approach, list *ñāṇa-dassana* as a part of the last three of seven stages of purification (*visuddhi*) that must be developed on the path to liberation. These are: “purification of the knowledge and vision of what the path is and what the path is not (*maggāmagga-ñāṇa-dassana-visuddhi*)”; “purification of knowledge and vision of the means (*paṭipadā-ñāṇa-dassana-visuddhi*)” of liberation; and “purification of knowledge and vision (*ñāṇa-dassana-visuddhi*)” itself, which is the pure gnostic vision that accompanies enlightenment.<sup>5</sup>

In *Mahāyāna* texts, *jñāna-darshana pāramitā* (perfection of knowledge and vision) is deemed synonymous with *prajñāpāramitā* (perfection of wisdom or gnosis), the sixth of the six or ten *pāramitās* to be attained by a *bodhisattva*.

See also: **jñāna**.

1. E.g. Buddhaghosa, *Visuddhimagga* 1:32, 7:46, PTSV pp.13, 207.
2. Buddhaghosa, *Visuddhimagga* 20:90–91, 22:113, 119, PTSV pp.629, 694–95.
3. See also e.g. *Anguttara Nikāya* 6:29, *Udāyi Sutta*, PTSA3 p.323; *Dīgha Nikāya* 33, *Sangūti Sutta*, PTSD3 pp.222–23.
4. *Dīgha Nikāya* 2, *Sāmaññaphala Sutta*, PTSD1 pp.76–85; cf. TBLD pp.104–8.
5. Buddhaghosa, *Visuddhimagga* 14:32, 18:2, 20:1ff., 21:1ff., 22:1ff., PTSV pp.443, 587, 606ff., 639ff., 672ff.; cf. PPVM pp.439, 609, 631ff., 666ff., 701ff.

**natthika-diṭṭhi**, **natthika-vāda** (Pa), **nāstika-dṛiṣṭi**, **nāstika-vāda** (S) *Lit.* nihilist (*nāstika*) doctrine (*dṛiṣṭi*, *vāda*); nihilistic view or belief. In the Buddhist Pali texts, *natthika-vāda* is used more or less synonymously with *uccheda-vāda* (annihilation doctrine), which posits that the self is annihilated at death, and that there is therefore no rebirth or law of *karma*.

*Natthika-vāda* refers to a wrong view or unwholesome (*akusala*) way of thinking founded upon negative and nihilistic notions. According to this way of thinking, the present life is all there is; there has been no previous life nor will there be a future one; nothing is knowable; for an individual, death is the end of everything and there is no afterlife; there is therefore no sense or merit in doing good deeds since all values are useless; there is no such thing as a law of *karma*; and – as a consequence of the foregoing – life itself is meaningless. *Natthika-diṭṭhi* is generally used in reference to particular groups who existed at the time of the Buddha and who are mentioned in the Pali texts.<sup>1</sup>

According to these texts, the Buddha taught that harbouring inaccurate beliefs or views concerning life is one of the greatest hindrances to spiritual progress. In the *Sutta Nipāta*, *natthika-diṭṭhi* is classed along with such things as unrestrained enjoyment of sensual pleasures, greed, injustice, arrogance, treachery, harshness, anger, bigotry, jealousy *etc.*, all of which are to be understood as grossly negative in nature.<sup>2</sup> *Natthika-diṭṭhi* is also one of the so-called ‘pernicious false views (*niyata-micchā-diṭṭhi*)’ that constitute the last of ten unwholesome (*akusala*) courses of action (*kamma-patha*). Three kinds of pernicious false view are identified: that existence has no cause (*ahetuka-diṭṭhi*); that there is no delayed effect from morally good or bad actions (*akiriya-diṭṭhi*) (*i.e.* that the law of *karma* does not exist); and the nihilist perspective (*natthika-diṭṭhi*).<sup>3</sup>

In the *Apaṇṇaka Sutta* of the *Majjhima Nikāya*,<sup>4</sup> the Buddha explains how these three pernicious wrong views automatically lead to “bodily misconduct, verbal misconduct, and mental misconduct”. They result in very poor

human behaviour because those who hold such views “do not see the danger, degradation and defilement of such unwholesome (*akusala*) states, nor do they see in wholesome (*kusala*) states the blessings of renunciation and the associated purification”.<sup>5</sup> In this *sutta*, the Buddha seems more concerned with the behaviour resulting from belief in a certain viewpoint, rather than whether or not the viewpoint is correct. He points out that acting as though there is an afterlife is a “safe bet”, because if there is no afterlife, then nothing is lost; but if there is an afterlife, then one has got the situation covered by having been well-behaved. On the other hand, acting badly in the belief that there is no afterlife is an altogether risky proposition.

See also: **uccheda-diṭṭhi**.

1. *E.g. Dīgha Nikāya* 23, *Pāyāsi Sutta*, *PTSD2* p.316ff.
2. *Sutta Nipāta* 2:2, *Āmagandha Sutta*, *PTSN* p.43.
3. See *Commentary (Tīkā) on Majjhima Nikāya* 22, *Alagaddūpama Sutta*, *PTSM1* pp.130–32.
4. *Majjhima Nikāya* 60, *Apaṇṇaka Sutta*, *PTSM1* pp.400–11.
5. *Majjhima Nikāya* 60, *Apaṇṇaka Sutta*, *PTSM1* p.402.

**nayavāda** (S) *Lit.* doctrine (*vāda*) of viewpoints, standpoints, or perspectives (*naya*); a Jain doctrine which acknowledges that there can be a variety of perspectives concerning something, each revealing some aspect of it; doctrine of partial or relative truths; a fundamental aspect of *anekāntavāda* (doctrine of non-exclusivity), which is a many-sided view of reality; an expression of the understanding that one’s view of anything is relative.

In Jainism, *naya* is distinguished from *pramāṇa*. *Pramāṇa* refers to something as it actually is – a full, unanalysed knowledge of the thing as it is in itself. *Naya* is an analysis, a perspective or viewpoint concerning some aspect of that thing. A thing may have innumerable qualities, aspects, and characteristics. *Naya* is an analytical study of those characteristics, and what is said about one aspect may appear contradictory to what is said about another. Yet both are true within their own contexts. Hence, it is often said that many *nayas* (perspectives) spring from a single *pramāṇa*. There can be as many *nayas* as there are ways of thinking or speaking about something. *Nayavāda* is a philosophical doctrine based upon this premise.

Ultimate Reality is essentially inexpressible. It has to be experienced to be truly ‘known’. But when analysed from a human perspective, because these perspectives are limited or relative to their own frames of reference, Reality can appear to possess many contradictory aspects, that are in fact complementary. There is no general agreement among Jain texts as to the number of *nayas*. They are variously counted as two, five, six, and

seven. However, seven principle *nayas* are frequently mentioned in Jain literature,<sup>1</sup> which are variously accepted by Buddhism and other schools of Indian philosophy:

1. The perspective of the common man (*naigama*), where the general and more detailed aspects of something are not differentiated. Thus, a person may say that he lives in a particular country, town, street, house, or even that he is a soul dwelling in a body (a *jīva*). The perspective ranges from the general to the specific, but the individual remains simultaneously aware that all the other perspectives are also true. All of these are valid *naigama* observations or perspectives. This *naya* is recognized by the *Vaisheshika* and *Nyāya* schools of Indian philosophy. As a philosophical school, *Nyāya* is recognized for its contributions to the theories of logic and knowledge (epistemology).
2. The collective (*saṃgraha*) perspective; the generic perspective or general overview, where the general aspects of something are given greater emphasis than the specific, seeking the common features of something. Thus, to describe something as *dravya* (substance, thing) is a *saṃgraha* perspective, for there are many classes or categories of substances or things. The *saṃgraha naya* is also recognized by the *Advaita* and *Sāṃkhya* schools of Indian philosophy.
3. The practical (*vyavahāra*) perspective, which concerns itself with the details of something, while at the same time remaining aware of the generic or more general viewpoint. Thus, a person may go shopping specifically for apples, while remaining aware that there are many other kinds of fruit. The *vyavahāra naya* is also recognized by the *Chārvāka* (materialism) school of Indian philosophy.

These first three perspectives are general, while the last four are increasingly detailed viewpoints to the extent that the final three are concerned only with the exact and appropriate use and meaning of words:

4. The linear or narrow (*ṛijusūtra*) perspective, which considers things only in the present moment, while consciously ignoring their past and future, since neither actually exist in the present moment. This *naya* perceives the reality of something solely as it appears at the present moment. The philosophy is also accepted by some schools of Buddhism.
5. The literal or verbal (*śabda*) perspective, which is the recognition of something purely by hearing its name.

6. The etymological (*samabhi-rūḍha*) perspective, which maintains that all words, because of their etymological roots, have different connotations and cannot therefore be true or exact synonyms; and that the real meaning of a word is therefore its etymological meaning. This is particularly identifiable in languages that have clear roots, such as Sanskrit. *Ghaṭa* and *kumbha*, for instance, are both words for a water pot, but the connotations of the words, due to their differing etymological roots, are different. Thus, the root of *ghaṭa* connotes busyness and activity, while *kumbha* (from *ku* + *umbha*) suggests the action of filling. These roots give a different ‘flavour’ to the word.
7. The functional perspective (*evambhūta*) is a further, more detailed perspective. It refers to the meaning of a word in the context in which it is being used. Thus, a hunter should only be called a hunter when he is actively engaged in hunting, not when pursuing other activities.

In his *Tattvārtha Sūtra*,<sup>2</sup> Āchārya Umāswāmī maintains that there are five main *nayas*, of which *naigama* (the common man) has two sub-categories and *shabda* (the literal) has three. Since both *evambhūta* and *samabhi-rūḍha* are concerned with the interpretation of words, Umāswāmī designates them as sub-categories of *shabda* in his five-category analysis.

Āchārya Kundakunda, on the other hand, maintains that there are really only two perspectives: the real or absolute (*nishchaya naya*) and the relative, material, or immediate (*vyavahāra naya*). In this instance, the absolute perspective is regarded as the higher of the two. This two-perspective viewpoint is often related to considerations of the *jīva* (incarnate soul) and its association with the body and subtle karmic matter, as understood by the Jain philosophy of *karma*. Thus, from a material (*vyavahāra*) or human perspective, viewed from the bottom up, so to speak, the soul (which is understood as consciousness *per se*) is bound to this world by *karma*, which arises from the influence of the passions (*kashāyas*) and an incorrect view of Reality (*mithyātva*), and which in turn leads to the normal human state of confusion and delusion (*moha*). From the absolute (*nishchaya*) perspective, however, looking from the top down, the soul is innately free and omniscient, so it is merely the *jīva*’s ignorance (*avidyā*) that prevents it from realizing its own true omniscience (*kevala-jñāna*) and state of liberation (*moksha*). The means to move from the material to the absolute or real perspective is understood to be meditation (*dhyāna*).

See also: **anekāntavāda, pramāṇa.**

1. See Samani S. Prajna, *Applied Philosophy of Anekanta*, APAP.
2. Āchārya Umāswāmī, *Tattvārtha Sūtra* 1:34–35.

**nembutsu ōjō** (J), **niànfó wǎngshēng** (C) *Lit.* birth (*ōjō*, *wǎngshēng*) by means of the recitation of the name (*niàn*) of the *buddha* (*butsu*, *fó*); to be born, after death, in the pure land of the celestial Amida Buddha (S. Amitābha Buddha, ‘Buddha of Infinite Light’); salvation in the beautiful pure land or western paradise of Amida Buddha known as *sukhāvātī* (J. *gokuraku*).

Recitation of the name of Amida Butsu refers to repetition of the Japanese *mantra*, “*Namu Amida Butsu* (C. *Nāmó Ēmítuófó*, ‘Homage to the Buddha of Infinite Light’).” The *mantra* is commonly known in Japanese as the *nembutsu*, which is a contraction of *Namu Amida Butsu*. Birth in *sukhāvātī* is distinguished from serial rebirth in *samsāra* (‘wandering’ in the realms of transmigration). Unless otherwise qualified, *wǎngshēng* (birth) generally presumes *wǎngshēng jìngtǔ*, which is birth in the pure land (*jìngtǔ*) of the celestial Amida Buddha.

According to Pure Land *sūtras*, Amida Buddha made two vows, the essence of which is that if any of those “who sincerely and joyfully entrust themselves to me, desire to be born in my land, and think of me even ten times” and “who awaken aspiration for enlightenment do various meritorious deeds and sincerely desire to be born in my land” should not be born in his pure land, then he, Amida Buddha, should not attain “perfect enlightenment”.<sup>1</sup>

In his *Senchakushū*,<sup>2</sup> an abbreviation of *Senchaku Hongan Nembutsushū* (‘Passages on the Selection of the *Nembutsu* in the Original Vow’), the Japanese *nembutsu* preacher Hōnen (1133–1212) symbolically describes *ōjō* as discarding all links to the material world and being born on or in a lotus bud in *sukhāvātī*. The expression he uses, which appears many times in the *Senchakushū*, is *nembutsu ōjō*, which means birth in the pure land by means of the *nembutsu*. Since depicting the nature of higher worlds or levels of consciousness is beyond the scope of words, Hōnen’s teaching concerning the nature of both *sukhāvātī* and birth there is necessarily vague. Nowadays, many believers understand birth in *sukhāvātī* to be entirely spiritual in nature, akin to the inner peace and spiritual insight engendered by repetition of the *nembutsu*. All seemingly physical descriptions are understood symbolically.

Hōnen also speaks of *shogyō ōjō* (C. *zhūxíng wǎngshēng*), which means birth in the pure land by means of manifold practices. The other practices that he mentions include the building of stupas, adhering to Buddhist precepts, meditation, and so on. Hōnen maintains that such practices can also result in birth in *sukhāvātī*, but that only the practice of the *nembutsu* is certain to do so. In fact, he says that the other methods are only mentioned by way of comparison, so that it can be understood why the practice of the *nembutsu* is the best. The reasons he gives for its pre-eminence are based on teachings given in Pure Land *sūtras* themselves, which insist: that the practice was selected and endorsed by Amida Buddha himself; that the historical Buddha gave the teaching to Ānanda, to be preserved for future generations; that the method is endorsed by the celestial *buddhas*; and that at the end of the present age, all



other teachings will disappear from the world, leaving only the practice of the *nembutsu*. The argument is clearly circular: the doctrine of the *sūtras* is true because the *sūtras* say so. Although Hōnen requested that the book should not be published widely until after his death, he laid out these ‘arguments’ in opposition to the Buddhist establishment of his day. But his real proof lay in his own experience. Hōnen is said to have repeated the *nembutsu* 60,000 to 70,000 times a day, a practice which must have had a profound effect upon his psyche, of both a spiritualizing and conditioning nature.

Among other texts promoting use of the *nembutsu* is the *Ōjō Yōshū* (‘Essentials of Rebirth’) by the Japanese *Tendai* monk Genshin (942–1017), born more than a century before Hōnen, which lays out the essential principles for rebirth in *sukhāvatī*. The book consists of scriptural passages in support of the *nembutsu* and details of its practice, which includes internal visualization of Amida. With its graphic portrayal of the splendours of *sukhāvatī* and the horrors of hell, together with a deathbed ceremony involving the chanting of and meditation on the *nembutsu*, the book became a popular and influential handbook for devotees.

See also: **nembutsu** (8.5).

1. *Larger Sukhāvatī-vyūha Sūtra* 6:18–19, *T12* 360:268a–b, *TPSN* p.14.
2. See glossary, *Hōnen’s Senchakushū*, *HSNV* pp.170–72.

**neshikah** (He) (pl. *neshikot*) *Lit.* kiss; kiss of God, divine kiss; a metaphor for the union of the soul with God, the ‘kiss’ being a transference of divine grace and power to the individual soul, by means of which the soul ascends to spiritual heights and experiences ecstasy or rapture; a metaphor for the *unio mystica* (mystic union) that is the goal of spiritual devotion.

The development of this metaphor in Judaism was based on the interpretation of a passage in the *Song of Songs*, “Let him (the beloved) kiss me with the kisses (*neshikah*) of his mouth.”<sup>1</sup> The divine kiss is the special grace of God, normally taken to mean the divine grace bestowed on the saintly, enabling them to adhere to the norms of Judaism, but understood mystically to refer to the culmination of mystical yearning, in which the devotee dies to the world in order to live in a state of spiritual ecstasy. It is when the Word of God in its true mystical sense is revealed to a soul.

There are many medieval legends associated with the prophet Moses, who was considered the ideal of religious and spiritual perfection, which relate that he died by the mouth of the Lord – that his soul was withdrawn from his body by the kiss of God. The sages of the *Talmud* interpreted the idiom ‘*al-pi* (at the command of)’ in a literal sense, as ‘by the mouth’ of God, from which they inferred that it implied a divine kiss.<sup>2</sup> Mystically, it refers to an



influx of the divine power, as a result of which one 'dies' to the world and lives spiritually within.

The Alexandrian Jewish philosopher-mystic Moses Maimonides (1135–1204) writes that, to achieve spiritual perfection, one must divest oneself of any taint of material or worldly preoccupation; one must worship God with all one's mind and soul, keeping the undivided attention on the spiritual reality throughout one's life. "The climax, for Maimonides, is death: death by a divine kiss."<sup>3</sup> There is a well-known passage in which Maimonides explains how Moses, Aaron and Miriam each died by a divine kiss:

The philosophers have already explained how the bodily forces of man in his youth prevent the development of moral principles. In a greater measure, this is the case as regards the purity of thought which man attains through the perfection of those ideas that lead him to an intense love of God. Man can by no means attain this so long as his bodily humours are hot. The more the forces of his body are weakened, and the fire of passion quenched, in the same measure does man's intellect increase in strength and light; his knowledge becomes purer, and he is happy with his knowledge. When this perfect man is stricken in age and is near death, his knowledge mightily increases, his joy in that knowledge grows greater, and his love for the object of his knowledge more intense, and it is in this great delight that the soul separates from the body.

To this state, our sages (of the *Talmud*) referred, when in reference to the death of Moses, Aaron and Miriam, they said that death was in these three cases nothing but a kiss (*neshikah*).<sup>4</sup> They say thus: we learn from the words, "And Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab by the mouth of the Lord,"<sup>5</sup> that his death was a kiss (*neshikah*). The same expression is used of Aaron: "And Aaron the priest went up into Mount Hor . . . by the mouth of the Lord, and died there."<sup>6</sup> Our sages said that the same was the case with Miriam, (that she also died by a kiss). But with regard to her the phrase "by the mouth of the Lord" is not employed, because it was not considered appropriate to use these words in the description of her death, as she was a female.

The meaning of this saying is that these three died in the midst of the pleasure derived from the knowledge of God and their great love for Him. When our sages figuratively call the knowledge of God, united with intense love for Him, a kiss (*neshikah*), they follow the well-known poetical diction, "Let Him kiss me (*yishakeni*) with the kisses (*neshikot*) of His mouth."

This kind of death, which in truth is deliverance from death, has been ascribed by our sages to none but to Moses, Aaron, and Miriam. The other prophets and pious men are beneath that degree: but their knowledge of God is strengthened when death approaches. . . .

Try to understand this chapter, endeavour with all your might to spend more and more time in communion with God, or in the attempt to approach Him; and to reduce the hours which you spend in other occupations, and during which you are not striving to come nearer unto Him.

*Moses Maimonides, Guide of the Perplexed 3:51, GPM pp.390–91*

Thus it is said by the sages that these biblical prophets not only died peacefully, but they died in ecstasy, in rapture – meaning that their souls cleaved to or were joined with God. This is the state that the *ḥasidim* called *yihud* (union), and ultimately *ayin* (nothing).

The divine kiss as the means of death is considered the special grace of God bestowed upon the saintly.

The *Zohar* writes that the kiss of God is a metaphor for the transference of divine love from God to the human being. It portrays the loving union of the soul and God:

In one of the most mysterious and most exalted parts of heaven there is a palace of love. The most profound mysteries are there; there are all souls well-beloved by the celestial King, the Holy One, praised be He, together with the holy spirits with whom He unites by kisses of His love (*nishikin de-rahimo*).

*Zohar, Mishpatim 2:97a; cf. in KRPH p.135*

Adolphe Franck, a nineteenth-century French philosopher, comments on this passage:

It is by virtue of this idea that the death of the righteous is called the ‘kiss of God’. This kiss ... is the union of the soul with the Substance (Source) from which it springs.

*Adolphe Franck, The Kabbalah, KRPH p.135*

Rabbi Louis Jacobs, in his book *Holy Living*, comments on the teachings of the eighteenth-century Jewish Moroccan mystic Rabbi Ḥayyim ibn Attar and the wordplay with his name *Ḥayyim* (life) and his book *Or ha-Ḥayyim* (‘Light of Life’):

There is a remarkable passage on the subject of saintly raptures in Ḥayyim Attar’s *Or ha-Ḥayyim*.<sup>7</sup> Attar is commenting on the verse “after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they drew near before the Lord, and died”.<sup>8</sup> He first observes that the two sons, like all the other saints (*ṣaddikim*), died by a divine kiss; the only difference was that for the other saints, the ‘kiss’ drew near to them, whereas the two sons of Aaron drew near to the kiss. The verse “they drew near before

the Lord; and they died” means that these saints did not cease from drawing nearer to the sweet, delightful longing of their attachment (*devekut*) to God, even though they knew that they would expire in longing as a result. Such a state, Attar continues, is inconceivable to the human mind and unintelligible to anyone who would try to record it. The experience is beyond comparison. . . .

Once this experience has taken hold of the saint’s innermost being, he comes to abhor his flesh and he leaves it behind, his soul returning to the Source.

*Louis Jacobs, Holy Living, HLLJ pp.73–74*

The Hasidic Rabbi Shneur Zalman delineated this transition explicitly in *Tanya* (‘It was Taught’):

When the intelligent person will reflect on these matters in the depths of his heart and brain, then . . . his soul will spontaneously be kindled . . . willingly to lay down and resolutely to abandon all he possesses in order only to cleave unto Him, may He be blessed, and be absorbed into His light with an attachment and longing and desire in a manner of ‘kissing’ and the attachment of spirit to spirit.

*Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Lyady, Tanya, LASZ p.139, in PAGH p.188*

Rabbi Shneur Zalman further clarifies what he means by the state that follows from having been ‘kissed’:

Through contemplation of the blessed Infinite, . . . the soul is kindled and flares up toward the glory of the splendour of His greatness . . . like glowing coals of a mighty flame which surges upwards, . . . and then it reaches a state of very rapture of the soul.

*Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Lyady, Tanya, LASZ p.140, in PAGH p.188*

See also: **dying to live (in Judaism) (8.3), kisses.**

1. *Song of Songs* 1:2.
2. See A. Jellinek, *Bet ha-Midrash, BMJI* pp.113–29; Michael Fishbane, *Kiss of God, KGSD* p.18.
3. Michael Fishbane, *Kiss of God, KGSD* p.24.
4. *Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Baba Batra* 172.
5. *Deuteronomy* 34:5.
6. *Numbers* 33:38.
7. Ḥayyim ibn Attar, *Or ha-Ḥayyim, OHHA* p.90.
8. *Leviticus* 16:1.

**nevasaññā-nāsaññāyatana** (Pa) *Lit.* realm (*āyatana*) of neither-knowing (*nevasaññā*) nor not-knowing (*nāsaññā*); sphere of neither-perception-nor-non-perception; fourth of the four immaterial or formless realms or divisions (*arūpāyatana*) of the formless or immaterial world (*arūpaloka*), according to Buddhist cosmology. The *arūpāyatanas* are also known as the *arūpa-jhānas* (formless or immaterial meditative absorptions), thus emphasizing the point that the transcendental realms can also be understood as stages in meditation. See **arūpāyatana** (8.5).

**ní** (C) *Lit.* mud, mire, clay. See **zhuó**.

**nì** (C) *Lit.* contrary, backwards; to go against; inversion; in Daoism, the inversion of the multiplicity of creation back into the unity of the *Dào*; the withdrawal of the *Dào* back into itself; the return (*fǎn*) of the spirit (*shén*) from its state of separation on this physical plane to its merging back into the *Dào*.

The notion of *nì* is common to the different forms of *nèidān* (inner alchemy) practices, wherein each of the primary components of material existence – *jīng* (vital essence), *qì* (subtle life energy), and *shén* (spirit) – is refined and transmuted back into the one preceding it, culminating in their return to the state of nonbeing (*wú*) or emptiness (*xū*).

The journey of the *shén* (spirit) is bidirectional – originally from the unity of the *Dào* to the multiplicity of creation and, inversely (*nì*), its return from multiplicity to reunion with the *Dào*.

Beyond the created worlds, there are no individual spirits (*shén*); they are a part of the *Dào*. Then:

The *Dào* generates the One (*yī*),  
the One generates the two,  
the two generates the three,  
and the three generate the ten thousand things (*wànwù*).

*Dàodé jīng* 42

In this cosmogonic process outlined in the *Dàodé jīng* (c. C3rd BCE), the *Dào* first generates the One (*yī*), also called the one Energy (*yīqì*) and the Energy of *Dào* (*dàoqì*), which incorporates the complementary, fully unified, and integrated principles of *yīn* and *yáng* (“the two”, *i.e.* duality). “The three” has been variously interpreted, but it is generally understood as the One that exists within all created things, together with the fundamental duality of *yīn* and *yáng*. Even the apparent duality of creation is encompassed by an all-embracing oneness. The “ten thousand things (*wànwù*)”, often translated as the ‘myriad things’, are the totality of everything produced by this creative process.

Lǐ Dào-chún (C13th) interprets the *Dàodé jīng* in the context of *nèidān*:

The *Dào* creates the One (*yī*); the One (*yī*) creates the two; the two create the three; and the three create the ten thousand things (*wànwù*). Void (*xū*) manifests as spirit (*shén*); spirit (*shén*) manifests as energy (*qì*); energy (*qì*) manifests as vital essence (*jīng*); and vital essence (*jīng*) manifests as form (*xíng*). This is called ‘going with (*shùn*) (the current of creation)’.

*Lǐ Dàochún, Zhōnghé jí, DZ249, JY226*

The *nèidān* process of inversion reverses this sequence so that the *shén* (spirit) may return to unity with the *Dào*. The three stages of *nèidān* practice represent the inversion of the creative process, with the eventual reversion of the myriad elements of creation into the Great Void or Emptiness (*xū*). This is achieved by eliminating the distinctions between each of the primary components of existence and the one immediately above it. *Lǐ Dàochún* continues:

The ten thousand things are pervaded by the three. The three return to two; the two return to the One (*yī*). Refine the vital essence (*jīng*) to its most subtle, then vital essence (*jīng*) transforms into life energy (*qì*), and life energy (*qì*) transforms into spirit (*shén*). This is called ‘going against (*nì*) (the current of creation)’.

*Lǐ Dàochún, Zhōnghé jí, DZ249, JY226*

In this *nèidān* interpretation, *Dào* is characterized by *xū* (emptiness); “the One” by *shén* (spirit); “the two” by *qì* (life energy); and “the three” by *jīng* (vital essence). Thus, the typical *nèidān* (inner alchemy) formulation of the process of reversion comprises refining *jīng* to transmute it into *qì*, refining *qì* to transmute it into *shén*, and refining *shén* to revert back to *xū*. *Lǐ Dàochún* summarizes:

Alchemical books say, “Going with (*shùn*) (the current) creates human beings; going against (*nì*) (the current) develops the elixir (*dān*) (of spiritual immortality).”

*Lǐ Dàochún, Zhōnghé jí, DZ249, JY226*

Spiritual illumination, described in the *Secret of the Golden Flower* as the “golden flower (*jīnhuá*)”, is attained by practising the “method of reversal”:

The way of the golden flower (*jīnhuá*) is, in sum, the method of reversal (*nì*).

*Jīnhuá zōngzhǐ 3, JH94, JY161, XB1, ZW334*

The same method is adopted in the meditation practice known as *huíguāng* (turning the light around, reversing the light) – reversing the habitual tendency of the attention to go out into the world, bringing it back to an inner focus:

The practice of reversing the light (*huíguāng*) is entirely related to the method of reversal (*nì*) in order to focus on the inherent mind (*tiānxīn*) that dwells within the sun and moon (between the eyes, at the transition between the physical and the spiritual, in the union of *yīn* and *yáng*).

*Jīnhuá zōngzhǐ 1, JH94, JY161, XB1, ZW334*

See also: **huíguāng** (8.5), **nèidān** (8.5).

**nibbuta** (Pa), **nirvṛita** (S) *Lit.* extinguished, ceased, terminated; quenched, cooled; also, happy, peaceful, tranquil, satisfied; in Buddhism, either a peaceful and tranquil state, or the state of *nibbāna*, the state of one who has quenched or cooled the three fires – sensual attachment (*rāga*), hatred (*dosa*), and delusion (*moha*) – that lie at the root of desire or craving (*taṇhā*), leading thereby to the cessation of suffering (*dukkha*) and to liberation from *samsāra*.

In the *Dhammapada*, the meaning seems to be that of a peaceful person:

Him I call a *brāhmaṇ*  
 who is without hostility among the hostile,  
 who is peaceful (*nibbuta*) among the violent,  
 who is unattached among the attached.

*Dhammapada 26:24*

In the *Questions of King Milinda*, *nibbuta* probably refers to the attainment of *nibbāna*:

Having drunk this *Dhamma* medicine,  
 you will be ageless and beyond death;  
 Having developed and seen the truth,  
 you will be quenched (*nibbuta*), free from craving.

*Questions of King Milinda 5:11, PTSQ p.335, GGD p.5*

The term is also found as a refrain at a number of places in the *Therīgāthā*, as for instance:

Self-controlled in body, speech, and mind,  
 having extracted craving from the root,  
 I am cooled (*nibbuta*) and free.

*Therīgāthā 1:15, PTST pp.124–25; cf. TPBW pp.14–15*

See also: **nirvāṇa**, **parinibbuta**.

**nidrā** (S/H) *Lit.* sleep, slumber, sleepiness; turpitude, sloth; the state of consciousness when the attention falls below the eye centre to the throat, heart or navel centres, when the brain and mind take rest, and thinking processes associated with the waking state are suspended.

Indian psychology speaks of two sleep states, normally known as *svapna* (dream) and *sushupti* (deep dreamless sleep). Jain teachers and philosophers have identified five kinds of *nidrā*, which are listed among nine forms of *darshanāvaraṇa-karma* (vision-obscuring *karma*),<sup>1</sup> which obscure the innate vision and perception of the soul. These five types of *nidrā* are: light sleep (*nidrā*); heavy sleep (*nidrā-nidrā*); light drowsiness (*prachalā*); heavy drowsiness (*prachalā-prachalā*); and somnambulism (*styānagriddhi* or *styānardhi*), when sleepwalkers may do things they would never normally do.

Sleep, says the *Bhagavad Gītā*,<sup>2</sup> is a quality associated with *tamas*, the *guṇa* of darkness, inertia, torpor, and negativity. Likewise, the *Maitrī Upanishad*:<sup>3</sup>

Bewilderment, fear, depression, sleepiness (*nidrā*), sloth (*tandrī*), heedlessness, old age, grief, hunger, thirst, weakness, anger, unorthodoxy, ignorance, jealousy, cruelty, stupidity, shamelessness, meanness, rashness, unequableness – these are the characteristics of the quality of inertia (*tamas*).

*Maitrī Upanishad* 3:5; cf. *PU* pp.807–8

Sleep, says Patañjali in his *Yoga Sūtras*, is one of the five activities or modifications (*vṛttis*) of the mind, namely:

*Pramāṇa* (perception, investigation, acquisition of information), *viparyaya* (misinterpretation, illusion), *vikalpa* (imagination, delusion), *nidrā* (sleep, dream), and *smṛiti* (memory, recollection).

*Patañjali, Yoga Sūtras* 1:6

He elucidates:

*Nidrā* is the modification (*vṛtti*) in which there is an absence of conscious content.

*Patañjali, Yoga Sūtras* 1:10

In this state, it is only the brain that sleeps, not the mind. The mind remains active at a higher level, but because the brain is taking a much-needed rest, there is no awareness or consciousness of the content of the mind. In dreams, some of this mental activity is received by the brain and can be recalled; but in deep sleep, no mental activity is registered by the brain. The mind, however, is still functioning. Perhaps this is part of the reason why one can often go to sleep with a problem on one's mind, to find on awakening that one has a solution.

From an external perspective, sleep is characterized by greatly reduced activity, consciousness, and response to sensory input. For the purposes of much-needed recovery after a day's activity, the brain is temporarily disengaged from the mind. The externally directed attention of the mind is no longer focused on the brain, but on the throat, heart, or navel centres.

In yogic meditation, the activity of the lower mind, which causes the activity in the brain, is brought under conscious control. As in sleep, the brain becomes disengaged, so to speak, but now full consciousness is retained. This is why good meditation is better than sleep, because the mind, which causes the brain activity, is also stilled, giving both the brain and mind some rest from activity. If the resting brain is simply disengaged from the active mind, then there is only partial refreshment. Sometimes, even a few minutes of deep meditation can refresh the mind and brain, when hours of sleep may fail to do so.

This is why mystics have often spoken of mystic experience as 'sleep'. It is not so much a metaphor as a straight description of what is taking place – a temporary suspension of the brain activity that results in waking consciousness. The brain sleeps, but the consciousness is wide awake within, more so than in normal waking life. There have even been cases where brain activity appears to have ceased altogether, and yet the person makes a return to full consciousness, having undergone what is called a near-death experience.

In the yogic tradition, the state in which the soul and mind become superconscious within, while the brain sleeps, is known as *yoganidrā*, and is the same as yogic *samādhi* (absorption). It is mentioned, for instance, in the *Haṭha Yoga Pradīpikā*:

One who has attained *yoganidrā* cannot fall victim to death (*kāla*, time).

*Haṭha Yoga Pradīpikā* 4:48; cf. HYP p.54

Hence the same text says that the yogi who practises *prāṇāyāma* rises above the need for bodily sleep:

He is adored by the circle of *yoginīs*, becomes the controller of creation and dissolution, and never feels hunger, thirst, sleep (*nidrā*), or laziness.

*Haṭha Yoga Pradīpikā* 2:55; cf. HYP p.23

In fact, when he rises up on the current of the *Nāda* (inner Sound), he becomes entirely free of all bodily constraints:

Going beyond the bliss of the mind (*chitta-ānanda*), the natural state of bliss (of the soul) (*sahaja-ānanda*) is experienced. Then there is freedom from all imbalances of the humours (*doshas*), pain, old age, disease, hunger, and sleep (*nidrā*).

*Haṭha Yoga Pradīpikā* 4:75; cf. HPSD p.74



Sleep also appears in mystical literature in a number of metaphorical contexts. It is said, for example, that the Divine never sleeps, is never unconscious, never falls a victim to His own web of *māyā* (illusion) and the sleep of spiritual ignorance (*avidyā*):

*Brahman* is birthless, sleepless (*anidrā*), dreamless, nameless, formless, ever effulgent, knower of all things.

*Gauḍapāda, Kārikā 3:36, on Māṇḍūkya Upanishad*

Sleep and dream are also used to describe the waking state of most souls in this world:

Just as the place, time, objects, knower, and so on, conjured up in sleep (*nidrā*), are all unreal, so too is the world experienced here in the waking (*jāgrat*) state; it all arises as a result of one's own ignorance (*ajñāna*).

*Shankara, Vivekachūḍāmaṇi 252; cf. VCSM p.98*

See also: **avasthā, sleep in meditation** (8.5).

1. E.g. Āchārya Umāswāmī, *Tattvārtha Sūtra* 8:7.
2. *Bhagavad Gītā* 14:8.
3. E.g. also Shankara, *Vivekachūḍāmaṇi* 116.

**nihang** (H/Pu) *Lit.* without (*ni*) restraint (*hang*); fearless, dauntless, carefree; also, shameless; often translated and interpreted as ‘without (*ni*) ego (*ahang*)’. Since all worries and anxieties are related to a sense of self, a person who can free himself from ego automatically frees himself from all cares and concerns. On the other hand, one who forgets the divine presence behaves badly without shame or compunction:

Man is like a pitcher of clay in water:

the more he indulges in ego, the more is he wasted away.

Man fears not the Lord, and is shorn of all restraint (*nihang*),  
and cherishes not the Lord who is ever in his company.

*Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 392, AGG*

**nikshep(a)** (S/H) *Lit.* analysis of the usage of a word; in Jainism, a method of defining the precise meaning or implications of a word by studying the context in which it is used; also called *nyāsa*.

The meaning of words can change depending upon the context, and the mind automatically alters its understanding of the meaning according to

this context. *Nikshepa* is an analytical means of arriving at the meaning of a word as it is used in a particular context. Āchārya Umāswāmī (c. C1st–2nd CE) lists four categories of *nikshepa* or contexts in which the meaning of a word can be considered:<sup>1</sup>

1. *Nāma-nikshepa*. Referring to something on the basis of its name (*nāma*) alone, without reference to its attributes or nature; *e.g.* when a person is said to be a king even though he may lack kingly qualities – when he is a king in name only.
2. *Sthāpana-nikshepa*. Referring to something by reference to some symbol that stands in its place (*sthāpana*) or represents it, such as an idol, a picture, a painting, or some other image; *e.g.* referring to an image of a king when the king himself is the intended meaning, as when looking at a photograph of King George, one might say, “That is King George.”
3. *Dravya-nikshepa*. Referring to something according to its potential condition, as it might have been in the past or as it might be in the future; *e.g.* referring to someone as a king who was once a king, as one might say, “King George did so-and-so.” In this context, *dravya* refers to the ‘thing’ that is being referred to.
4. *Bhāva-nikshepa*. Analysis of something according to its present or actual condition; *e.g.* referring to someone as a king who possesses all the necessary kingly qualities and is actually a reigning monarch at the present time, as in, “King George is the king.” *Bhāva-nikshepa* is the real sense of a word. In this context, *bhāva* refers to the actual existence of something.

Using a religious example, some people worship God by remembrance and repetition of one of His names; some worship Him through the intermediary of an idol that represents Him; some worship Him through a *guru* who they regard as standing in the place of God; others worship Him directly, as He really is. The latter category are the true mystics.

1. Āchārya Umāswāmī, *Tattvārtha Sūtra* 1:5; see *Jain Philosophy and Practice* 2, JPP2.

**nim ve-lo nim** (He) *Lit.* asleep (*nim*) but not (*ve-lo*) asleep (*nim*); a state of consciousness just before fully awakening, in which the mind is receptive to the influx or flow of the divine Reality.

*Nim ve-lo nim* was a term used by Isaac ben Samuel of Akko (1250–1340) to describe the way in which he received inspired interpretations of biblical passages. Isaac believed that all his spiritual experiences (whether they came

in dreams or while he was awake) were “openings into a symbolic unveiling of an incessantly meaningful reality”.<sup>1</sup> In his *Oẓar Ḥayyim* (‘Treasure of Life’), he writes:

I fell asleep again. Then I awoke from my sleep, and in my mouth was the verse: “The heavens belong to the Lord (*Yahweh*), but the earth He gave over to humans.”<sup>2</sup> And in the state of being asleep but not asleep (*nim ve-lo nim*), I saw that the meaning of this verse is that . . . the “heavens” allude to the *muskalot* (the spiritual dimensions) and the “earth” alludes to the corporeal (physical), sensate dimensions.

*Isaac of Akko, Oẓar Ḥayyim, OHIA fol.158b–59a, in LBDF p.107*

And similarly:

I, the young one, Isaac of Akko, awoke from my sleep, and suddenly I saw the secret of the statement of our rabbis of blessed memory, that while Moses our master was writing down the *Torah*, he saw it written in the air of the heavens, black fire upon white fire.

*Isaac of Akko, Oẓar Ḥayyim, OHIA fol.106b, in LBDF p.110*

In another place, Isaac refers to a revelation concerning “a secret pertaining to the human soul”, though he gives no further indication regarding the nature of the “secret”:

Close to dawn, in the state of being asleep but not asleep (*nim ve-lo nim*), I saw a secret pertaining to the human soul.

*Isaac of Akko, Oẓar Ḥayyim, OHIA fol.123a, in LBDF p.110*

At another time, he describes the experience of an inner light and deep insight into the eternity and unity of God:

During the third watch of the night, asleep but not asleep (*nim ve-lo nim*), I saw the house in which I was sleeping to be filled with a very sweet and pleasing light. And this light was not like the light that comes from the sun, but it was like the light of day, the light of dawn just before the sun shines. This light stood before me for something like a third of an hour, and I hurried to open my eyes to see if dawn had risen or not, (to see whether it was time) to get up to pray. I saw that it was still night, and I returned to my sleep very happy.

(Subsequently), after I arose from my bed to pray, I suddenly saw a secret pertaining to the letter *alef* that is written in Assyrian script. (The form of the *alef* in Assyrian script) is a clear proof for the unity (*yihud*) and simplicity and eternity of the Singular Master, blessed be the name of His glorious kingdom for ever and ever, for He has

no beginning and He has no end, and He has no place, for He is the place for everything. . . . The *alef* is simple with complete simplicity, without any composite (any multiplicity whatsoever).

*Isaac of Akko, Oẓar Ḥayyim, OHIA fol.197a, in LBDF pp.111–12*

See also: **lucid dreaming**.

1. Eitan Fishbane, *As Light Before Dawn*, LBDF p.106.
2. *Psalms* 115:16.

**nirbīja samādhi** (S) *Lit.* without (*nis*) seed (*bīja*) absorption (*samādhi*); the ultimate absorption in the sourceless or seedless *Brahman*, that exists for Itself and of Itself, outside the limitations of time and space; equivalent to *nirvikalpa samādhi*, and to the highest level of *samprajñāta samādhi*; contrasted with *sabīja* (with seed) *samādhi*.

In the *Yoga Sūtras*, having explained that absorption in something higher (*i.e. sabīja samādhi*) keeps away the impressions of something lower, Patañjali adds that *sabīja samādhi* is replaced by the higher *nirbīja samādhi*:

With the elimination (*nirodha*) of even that  
through the elimination of all (remaining mental impressions),  
seedless absorption (*nirbīja samādhi*) is attained.

*Patañjali, Yoga Sūtras 1:51*

In another verse, after explaining that *dhāraṇā*, *dhyāna* and *samādhi* are internal in relationship to the five outer practices (restraints, observances, posture, breath control, and detachment), Patañjali adds:

Even these three are external to *nirbīja samādhi*.

*Patañjali, Yoga Sūtras 3:8*

*Sabīja samādhi* is so-called because all *karmas* and *saṃskāras* (impressions) have been surmounted and reduced to seed form, though there remains a danger that they may sprout once again in course of time or according to circumstances. This is why, until all the seeds of *karma* and past impressions have been destroyed, even an evolved soul can still fall prey to ordinary human temptations. In *nirbīja samādhi*, the seeds of *karma* have been entirely burnt up or destroyed.

*Sabīja samādhi* is equivalent to *samprajñāta samādhi*. The ‘seed’ refers to the object or focus of contemplation. As the soul rises up towards *Brahman*, it passes through a succession of stages or realms of the mind. The passage through each realm first requires a process of focusing upon the energy centre, the creative powerhouse, the ‘void (*śūnya*)’ or the ‘sky (*ākāśa*)’

of that realm. When the soul concentrates and contemplates upon the sky of a particular realm, that is known as *sabīja* or *samprajñāta samādhi*, for it is filled with the object of contemplation. Merging into or becoming absorbed in the sky of that region is *nirbīja* or *asamprajñāta samādhi*. At this point, the soul has become one with the object of contemplation, and the distinction of knower and known has been dissolved. What distinguishes *sabīja samādhi* from *nirbīja samādhi* is the presence of an object or seed, of some aspect of *prakṛiti* lying within the realms of the mind. *Prakṛiti* is primal nature or primal matter, and constitutes the subtle blueprint of all forms that exist within the mind regions, including the physical realm.

There is, however, further to travel before the final goal is reached, and the soul must once again focus upon ascending to the next higher region. In this way, therefore, it passes through a series of *sabīja samādhis*, each followed by a *nirbīja* or *asamprajñāta samādhi*. The term *nirbīja samādhi* seems to be reserved for the final merging into *Brahman*, when all seeds or *karma* have been destroyed and all objects of concentration have been surmounted.

These terms for the various forms of *samādhi* are not always used specifically or consistently, however, and can therefore be the cause of confusion.

See also: **asamprajñāta samādhi**, **samādhi**.

**nirodha** (S/Pa), **’gog pa** (T), **miè** (C), **metsu** (J) *Lit.* cessation, stopping, obstruction, prevention, elimination, extinction; suppression, restriction, inhibition; used in a variety of contexts, both general and specific.

In Jain literature, in addition to its general meaning, *nirodha* also appears in a term for the prevention of the influx (*āsrava-nirodha*) of karmic particles.

In Hindu texts, *nirodha* is used in a general way for control or restraint of the mind, body, speech, and so on. The term also appears in expressions such as *janma-nirodha* (stoppage of birth, free from birth), implying not being subject to birth (and death) – a term used to describe the eternal, undying, changeless *Brahman*.<sup>1</sup> According to the *Shvetāshvatara Upanishad*:

I know this unaging ancient One, Soul of all, omnipresent by pervading all. People say that He is free from birth (*janma-nirodha*) – he whom the knowers of *Brahman* call eternal.

*Shvetāshvatara Upanishad* 3:21

In classical Indian *yoga*, *nirodha* is associated with the opening verses of Patañjali’s *Yoga Sūtras*, which he begins with the well-known words:

Herewith – an exposition of *yoga*.

*Yoga* is cessation (*nirodha*) of the waves of the mind (*chitta-vṛitti*).

*Patañjali, Yoga Sūtras* 1:1–2

In this context, *nirodha* means restraint, confinement and control, leading to cessation or stilling of the mind. Once this stillness has been attained, the essential consciousness or awareness – which is the primary witness, self, or seer of all experience – realizes its own natural state of being:

Consciousness (*drashṭā*) then exists in its own natural state;  
Otherwise, it identifies with the fluctuations (*vr̥tti*).  
The *vr̥ttis* are fivefold.

*Patañjali, Yoga Sūtras 1:3–5*

Patañjali goes on to add<sup>2</sup> that this stillness of the mind is accomplished through spiritual practice (*abhyāsa*):

The cessation (*nirodha*) of the waves of the mind (*chitta-vr̥ttis*)  
is brought about by practice (*abhyāsa*) and detachment.

*Patañjali, Yoga Sūtras 1:12*

In Patañjali's presentation of the fivefold *vr̥ttis*, he indicates four degrees of *nirodha*. Following the more general *vr̥tti-nirodha*, which is attained by meditation (*dhyāna*),<sup>3</sup> the remaining three degrees are:

*Pratyaya-nirodha* (cessation of conceptions, thoughts, and ideas). Attained at the level of *samprajñāta samādhi*, in which some self-awareness of union with *Brahman* still remains.<sup>4</sup>

*Samskāra-nirodha* (cessation of impressions). Refers to the elimination of hidden seeds or impressions that may otherwise lie dormant in the mind, unerased and hindering spiritual progress; attained at the level of *asamprajñāta samādhi*, in which the distinction of the knower, the knowing and that which is known has been dissolved as the soul (*ātman*) attains complete union with the supreme *Ātman* (Self) or *Brahman*.<sup>5</sup>

*Sarva-nirodha* (complete cessation). Total cessation of mental activity, representing the final goal of spiritual endeavour and coinciding with the highest *samādhi* – *dharmamegha samādhi* (cloud of spirituality) – which brings all suffering and *karma* to an end.<sup>6</sup>

*Nirodha* is also used in *yoga* texts for the retention, restraint or control of the physical breath and *prāṇa* (subtle life energy).<sup>7</sup>

In Buddhism, *nirodha* implies the cessation of all cravings (*taṇhā*) and other impurities that cause suffering and keep sentient beings in the realms of *saṃsāra* (transmigration). In this sense, *nirodha* is synonymous with *nirvāṇa* (Pa. *nibbāna*). It is a central aspect of Buddhist teachings, embodied in the third of the four noble truths – “cessation of suffering (*dukkha-nirodha*)”,

also called *nirodha-satya* (the truth of cessation). The four noble truths are: suffering (*dukkha*) is universally prevalent; the origin of suffering is craving (*taṇhā*); there can be an end to suffering (*dukkha-nirodha*) – i.e. *nibbāna*; and the way leading to the end of suffering (*dukkha-nirodha*) is to follow the noble eightfold path (*ariyāṭṭhangika-magga*):

Now this, *bhikkhus*, is the noble truth of the cessation of suffering (*dukkha-nirodha*). It is the remainderless fading away and cessation (*nirodha*) of that same craving, the giving up and relinquishing of it, freedom from it, non-reliance on it.

Now this, *bhikkhus*, is the noble truth of the way leading to the cessation of suffering (*dukkha-nirodha*). It is this noble eightfold path (*ariyāṭṭhangika-magga*), that is to say: right understanding, right thinking, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration.

*Samyutta Nikāya* 56:11, *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta*,  
PTSS5 pp.421–22; cf. CDBB p.1844

Knowledge of the cessation (*nirodha-nāṇa*) of suffering and knowledge of the way of practice that leads to the cessation (*nirodha-gāmini paṭipadā-nāṇa*) of suffering are counterparts to the third and fourth aspects of the four noble truths. *Nirodhānupassanā* (contemplation of cessation) is also one of the “eighteen principal insights (*vipassanā*)” listed in Buddhaghosa’s *Visuddhimagga*.<sup>8</sup>

The origin of suffering and rebirth is depicted in the twelve links (*nidāna*) in the chain of dependent origination (Pa. *paṭicca-samuppāda*), by which one thing leads to another. These begin with the spiritual ignorance (*avijjā*) with which a child is born; lead through attachment to sensory experience to craving or strong desire (*taṇhā*), which results in clinging (*upādāna*) to the things of mind and body and the accumulation of *kamma* (S. *karma*); and culminate in rebirth, which leads inevitably to old age and death. As the process is summarized in the *Paṭiccasamuppāda Vibhanga Sutta* (‘Discourse on the Analysis of Dependent Origination’) of the *Samyutta Nikāya*:

With birth as a condition, then aging and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, and despair come into play. Such is the origination of this whole mass of suffering (*dukkhakkhandha*).

*Samyutta Nikāya* 12:2, *Paṭiccasamuppāda Vibhanga Sutta*,  
PTSS2 p.1; cf. CDBB p.533

Understanding the process by which suffering comes about leads automatically to an awareness of how to bring an end to each of the individual links in the chain and hence bring an end to suffering. The resulting chain of cessation is laid out in the same detail as the chain of origination:

From the cessation (*nirodha*) of birth, then aging and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, and despair all cease. Such is the cessation (*nirodha*) of this whole mass of suffering.

*Samyutta Nikāya 12:2, Paṭiccasamuppāda Vibhanga Sutta,*

*PTSS2 p.2; cf. CDBB p.534*

Understood in another context, *nirodha* is also used for the successive cessation or extinction (Pa. *anupubba-nirodha*, S. *anupūrvā-nirodha*) of the eight levels of materio-mental existence that are experienced during penetration of the eight *jhānas* (states or stages of meditative absorption), which lead on to the ninth and final degree of attainment – *nirodha-samāpatti* (attainment of cessation), in which the *jhānas* have been transcended. As the meditator rises through these realms or *jhānas*, the perception, knowing or cognition (*saññā*) that prevails in the preceding realm is surmounted and comes to an end:

*Bhikkhus*, there are these nine progressive cessations (*anupubba-nirodha*). What nine? For one who has attained the first *jhāna*, cognition of the senses has ceased. For one who has attained the second *jhāna*, initial and sustained thought (*vitakka-vicāra*) have ceased. For one who has attained the third *jhāna*, rapture (*pīti*) has ceased. For one who has attained the fourth *jhāna*, in-breathing and out-breathing (*assāsa-passāsa*) have ceased. For one who has attained the realm of boundless space (*ākāśānañcāyatana*), the cognition (*saññā*) of form has ceased. For one who has attained the realm of boundless consciousness (*viññāṇañcāyatana*), the cognition (*saññā*) pertaining to the realm of boundless space has ceased. For one who has attained the realm of no-thingness (*ākīñcaññāyatana*), the cognition (*saññā*) pertaining to the realm of boundless consciousness has ceased. For one who has attained the realm of neither-knowing-nor-not-knowing (*nevasaññā-nāsaññāyatana*), the cognition (*saññā*) pertaining to the realm of no-thingness has ceased. For one who has attained the cessation of cognition and feeling (*saññā-vedayita-nirodha*), cognition and feeling have ceased. These, *bhikkhus*, are the nine progressive cessations (*anupubba-nirodha*).

*Anguttara Nikāya 9:31, Anupubbanirodha Sutta, PTSA4 p.409, NDBB p.1287*

This spiritual ascent is also referred to as *anupubba-vihāra-samāpatti* (attainment of the successive abodes). *Saññā-vedayita-nirodha*, which is synonymous with *nirodha-samāpatti*, is equivalent to final extinction or *nirvāṇa* – a state of sublime inner absorption and understanding that is beyond description. In this state, the physical and mental faculties are suspended, and numerous stories are related of monks who have remained in this state for days on end (often seven) despite raging fires in the neighbourhood, the proximity of tigers, and so on. It is sometimes described as a state of



‘suspended animation’, but this description poses more questions than it answers. In a general sense, it is a state of consciousness – a supramundane or transcendental state – but this must be understood with the recognition that Buddhist philosophy and psychology contain an extensive analysis of all the materio-mental factors and kinds of consciousness that are a part of the human constitution. The scholastic *Abhidharma* literature contains much discussion concerning the nature of *nirvāṇa*, but it is clear that no description or conceptual framework will ever be able to describe what lies beyond the confines of everyday human consciousness. Indeed, it is difficult to define what takes place in ordinary human consciousness.

The mystery is well depicted in a Chinese poem that echoes verses from the *Sutta Nipāta*,<sup>9</sup> and is set as a dialogue with the Buddha. The verse is quoted by Nāgārjuna:

After cessation (*nirodha*), is it impossible to reappear?  
Can he who has disappeared be reborn?  
Having entered *nirvāṇa*, does one remain there always?  
May the great sage tell me the truth!

The Buddha replied:

He who has disappeared cannot be described;  
He escapes from causes and conditions,  
from names and characteristics.  
He has gone beyond the reach of all speech;  
In a moment, he disappears like an extinguished fire.

*Bōluó Yán, T1 26:678a23–679a25, in Mahāprajñāpāramitā Śāstra 8,  
T25 1509:85b; cf. TVW1 p.202*

One of the key terms used in descriptions of the four higher *jhānas* is *saññā*, the meaning of which encompasses most aspects of everyday thought, as well as mental function in higher spheres of consciousness. Depending on the context, it can be understood as cognition, perception, awareness, reflection, meditation, contemplation, and so on. It covers all the basic, gross and subtle functions of the mind and consciousness that exist in *kāmaloka*, *rūpaloka*, and *arūpaloka* – the realms crossed during ascent through the *jhānas*.

According to the *Poṭṭhapāda Sutta* of the *Dīgha Nikāya*, as a meditator reflects upon his rise from one *jhāna* to the next, he comes to the realization that knowing (*saññā*) and mental activity, however subtle they may be, are the cause of suffering. He therefore seeks their cessation (*nirodha*):

From the moment a monk gains this controlled knowing (*saññā*),  
he proceeds from stage to stage till he reaches the limit of knowing

(*saññā*). When he has reached the limit of knowing (*saññā*), it occurs to him: “Mental activity (*cetayamānassa*) is worse for me; lack of mental activity is better. If I were to think and imagine, these subtle knowings (*saññā*) (that I have attained) would cease, and coarser knowings (*saññā*) would arise in me. Suppose I were not to think or imagine?” So he neither thinks nor imagines, and then only these subtle knowings (*saññā*) arise in him, while other, coarser knowings (*saññā*) do not arise. And so he attains cessation. And that . . . is the way by which attainment of the fully aware, ultimate cessation of knowing (*abhi-saññā-nirodha-sampajāna-samāpatti*) comes about by successive steps (*anupubba*).

*Dīgha Nikāya 9, Poṭṭhapāda Sutta, PTSD1 p.184; cf. TBLD pp.162–63*

In this context, cessation of knowing (*saññā-nirodha*) is synonymous with *nibbāna* (extinction, enlightenment). As the Buddha says in another discourse, this “cessation of knowing and feeling (*saññā-vedayita-nirodha*)” is the “consummation and perfection of direct knowledge”:

By completely transcending the realm of neither-knowing-nor-not-knowing (*nevasaññā-nāsaññāyatana*), one enters upon and abides in the cessation of knowing and feeling (*saññā-vedayita-nirodha*). . . . And it is there that many disciples of mine abide, having reached the consummation and perfection of direct knowledge (*abhiññā*).

*Majjhima Nikāya 77, Mahāsakuludāyī Sutta, PTSM2 p.13; cf. MDBB p.639*

When the meditator achieves cessation of all mental activity – even the fine or subtle mental activity or knowing (*saññā*) that exists in the *rūpa* and *arūpa* realms – his impurities are destroyed. Not only does he go beyond attachment to the world, but also beyond the range or realm of *Māra* (‘Death’, the Evil One), the Buddhist personification of death:

Again, by completely transcending the realm of neither-knowing-nor-not-knowing (*nevasaññā-nāsaññāyatana*), a *bhikkhu* enters upon and abides in the cessation of knowing and feeling (*saññā-vedayita-nirodha*). And his impurities (*āsavas*) are destroyed by his seeing with gnosis (*paññā*). Such a *bhikkhu* is said to have blindfolded *Māra*, to have become invisible to the Evil One (*Pāpimantu*) by depriving *Māra*’s eye of its opportunity, and to have gone beyond attachment to the world (*loka*). He walks without fear, stands without fear, sits without fear, lies down without fear. Why is that? Because he is out of the domain of the Evil One (*Pāpimantu*).

*Majjhima Nikāya 26, Ariyapariyesanā Sutta, PTSM1 p.175; cf. MDBB p.268*

Since *saññā*, as cognition, perception, memory, knowing, thinking and feeling, includes all the basic, gross and subtle functions of the mind and

consciousness that exist in *kāmaloka*, *rūpaloka* and *arūpaloka*, the Buddha is saying that cessation (*nirodha*) of all such aspects of mind and knowing is to go beyond the domain of *Māra*.

The analytical *Sarvāstivāda* (founded C2nd–1st BCE) and *Yogāchāra* (founded C4th) schools of scholastic Sanskrit Buddhism also identified two further categories of *nirodha* – *pratisaṃkhyā-nirodha* (S) and *apratisaṃkhyā-nirodha* (S). *Pratisaṃkhyā-nirodha* is described as cessation (*nirodha*) arising from effort and reflection (*pratisaṃkhyā*), the elimination of some mental phenomenon (*dharma*) or aspect of mind function or impurity (*klesha*) by analysing it. It is contrasted with *apratisaṃkhyā-nirodha*, which is elimination of the same that is not occasioned by conscious effort and intention to eliminate it, but which happens unconsciously in the absence of the conditions necessary for its re-emergence.

See also: **asamprajñāta samādhi**, **pratisaṃkhyā-nirodha**, **saññā** (►1).

1. E.g. *Prashna Upanishad* 1:10; *Maitrī Upanishad* 6:20.
2. See also Patañjali, *Yoga Sūtras* 1:51, 3:9.
3. Patañjali, *Yoga Sūtras* 2:11.
4. Patañjali, *Yoga Sūtras* 1:17.
5. Patañjali, *Yoga Sūtras* 1:18.
6. Patañjali, *Yoga Sūtras* 4:29–30.
7. E.g. *Haṭha Yoga Pradīpikā* 2:2–3, 9, 49, 3:22, 4:16, 19, 42, *HPSD*; Sundaradeva, *Haṭha-tattva-kaumudī* 1:5, 17, 5:10, 34, 12:2, *passim*, *HTKS* pp.2, 16, 64, 71, 147.
8. Buddhaghosa, *Visuddhimagga* 20:90, *PTSV* pp.629–30.
9. *Sutta Nipāta* 5:6, *Upasiva-māṇava-pucchā*, *PTSN* p.207.

**nirodha-samāpatti** (Pa) *Lit.* attainment (*samāpatti*) of cessation (*nirodha*); the ninth and highest level of attainment, attained after passing through the eight *jhānas* (states or stages of meditative absorption); also called *saññā-vedayita-nirodha* (cessation of knowing and feeling). See **nirodha**.

**nirupadhishesha nirvāṇa** (S), **lhag ma med pa'i mya ngan las 'das pa** (T), **wúyú nièpán** (C), **muyo nehan** (J) *Lit.* *nirvāṇa* (*mya ngan las 'das pa*, *nièpán*) without (*nis*, *med pa*, *wú*) limiting (*upādhi*) remainder (*shesha*, *lhag ma*, *yú*); *nirvāṇa* without residue; *nirvāṇa* with no fuel (Pa. *upādi*) remaining, an allusion to the loss of the mental and bodily aggregates (*skandhas*) at death, so that nothing is left to kindle desire or craving; final liberation from further activity or rebirth in this world; final *nirvāṇa*, which takes place at death, marking the end of the cycle of rebirth, *saṃsāra*, *karma*, and individual existence; used synonymously with *anupadhishesha nirvāṇa* and *parinirvāṇa*. See **anupadhishesha nirvāṇa**.

**nirvāṇ(a)** (S/H), **nibbāna** (Pa), **nirbān** (H), **nirbāṇ** (Pu), **mya ngan las 'das pa** (T), **jīmiè, nièpán** (C), **jakumetsu, nehan** (J) *Lit. nis* (a negative suffix) + the root *va* (to blow); hence to cease blowing, to be extinguished; a blowing out, as of a candle; extinction, annihilation (of impurities and imperfections); alternatively, 'he who has been cooled (or quenched),' referring to the cooling or elimination of all desires; transcendence (*las 'das pa*) of suffering (*mya ngan*); tranquillity (*jī, jaku*) + extinction (*miè, metsu*); a state of utter peace, tranquillity, joy, and bliss; a Hindu, Jain and Buddhist term for ultimate spiritual enlightenment, the highest goal of spiritual aspiration; the annihilation or extinction of the illusory individual self; the state of complete cessation or extinction of desires, cravings, and suffering; hence, realization of one's innate purity and freedom, and of one's own true nature; the attainment of the highest mystic realization, free from illusion (*māyā*) and false knowledge (*avidyā*), and arising from the elimination of *karma*; liberation or salvation from the cycle of birth and death; the solution to *samsāra* (worldly existence, the cycle of rebirth, suffering); freedom from bondage to material existence; union with the divine Infinite, outside of space; the experience of eternity, outside of time; also called *kaivalya*, *moksha*, and *mukti*. *Nirvāṇ pad* (stage of *nirvāṇa*) or *nirbān pad* are terms that have been used by Indian *sants* and mystics especially since the fifteenth century.

Various philosophers and mystics have tried to explain something of the nature of *nirvāṇa*. Interpreting it from a Hindu perspective ("becoming one with the eternal Reality"), S. Radhakrishnan writes:

*Nirvāṇa* is neither annihilation nor existence as we can conceive it, but is becoming one with the eternal Reality, which Buddha does not explicitly admit. Only since it is beyond the horizon of human thought are we obliged to employ negative terms to describe it. It is a condition of transcending subject-object relations. In it there is no trace of self-consciousness. It is a state of activity which is not subject to causality, for it is unconditioned freedom. It is a state real and enduring, though not existent in the world of time and space. The psalms of the (Buddhist) elders and the nuns are full of eloquent descriptions of the deep joy and the immortal delight of *nirvāṇa*, surpassing all description. The individual consciousness enters into a state where all relative existence is dissolved. It is the silent Beyond. In one sense, it is self-extinction, in another sense absolute freedom. . . .

Buddha's real attitude is probably that *nirvāṇa* is a state of perfection inconceivable by us, and if we are obliged to offer descriptions of it, it is best to bring out its inconceivability by negative descriptions, its richness of content by positive predicates, realizing all the time that such descriptions are at best approximations only.

*S. Radhakrishnan, Indian Philosophy, IP1 pp.450, 453*

Swami Prabhavananda has a similar viewpoint:

The *nirvāṇa* of Buddha is ... not a state of annihilation but the attainment of the unchangeable Reality, which can be positively described as the eternal peace. But what this peace really is, no words can define. All definition can be only symbolic, and can offer only a vague suggestion. Buddha employs negative terms for its description, such as freedom from misery and death, freedom “from sensuality, from the ego, from delusion, from ignorance”.<sup>1</sup>

*Swami Prabhavananda, Spiritual Heritage of India, SHI p.186*

The Buddhist scholar, translator and practitioner Edward Conze (1904–1979) puts the Buddhist point of view:

We are told that *nirvāṇa* is permanent, stable, imperishable, immovable, ageless, deathless, unborn, and unbecome; that it is power, bliss and happiness, the secure refuge, the shelter, and the place of unsailable safety; that it is the real Truth and the supreme Reality; that it is the Good, the supreme goal and the one and only consummation of our life, the eternal, hidden, and incomprehensible Peace.

*Edward Conze, Buddhism, BEDC p.40*

The *Lankāvatāra Sūtra* endorses these perspectives from the *Mahāyāna* Buddhist standpoint:

*Nirvāṇa* is where the thinking mind, with all its differentiations, attachments, aversions and egoism, is forever put away; is where logical means, being understood as lifeless, are no longer seized upon; is where even the notion of Truth is treated with indifference, being a source of confusion; is where ... there is insight into the abode of Reality. *Nirvāṇa* is ... where, by the attainment of ‘turning about’ in the deepest seat of consciousness, self-realization of noble wisdom is fully entered into. That is the *nirvāṇa* of the *Tathāgatas*.

*Lankāvatāra Sūtra 13; cf. BBDG pp.174–75*

*Mahāyāna* Buddhism describes two main categories of *nirvāṇa*.

1. *Sopadhishesha nirvāṇa* (S), *saupādisesa nibbāna* (Pa), *uyoe nehan* (J). *Lit.* *nirvāṇa* with (sa) residue (*shesha*) or limitation (*upādhi*); incomplete *nirvāṇa*; *nirvāṇa* attained during human life through the elimination of imperfections (*āśrava*) and impurities (*klesha*), but in which the five aggregates (*skandha*) that serve as a basis for the sense of self-identity remain, and the enlightened person is still subject to suffering and the

effect of past *karma*, although no new *karma* is incurred; also called *kilesa-parinibbāna* (Pa. extinction of impurities).

2. *Anupadhishesha nirvāṇa* (S), *anupādisesa nibbāna* (Pa), *muyoe nehan* (J). *Lit.* *nirvāṇa* without (*an*) residue (*shesha*) or limitation (*upādhi*); final *nirvāṇa*, which takes place at death, marking the end of the cycle of rebirth, *saṃsāra*, *karma*, and individual existence; also called *parinirvāṇa* (final *nirvāṇa*), or *nirupadhishesha nirvāṇa* (*nirvāṇa* without limitation). This is the same as *pratishṭhita nirvāṇa* (abiding *nirvāṇa*), in which the liberated being remains sufficient unto ‘himself’, having nothing further to do with humanity.

These two states correspond to the Hindu *jīvanmukti* (liberation while living) and *videhamukti* (liberation after leaving the body). Other categories of *nirvāṇa* include *apratishṭhita nirvāṇa* (unlocalized or abiding *nirvāṇa*), a *Mahāyāna* term for the *nirvāṇa* of a *buddha* who dwells neither in *saṃsāra* nor in the ultimate *nirvāṇa*. He has attained *nirvāṇa*, but on account of his great compassion (*karuṇā*), he chooses to dwell in *saṃsāra*, unblemished by it, in order to help sentient beings attain their own enlightenment. *Apratishṭhita nirvāṇa* is contrasted with *pratishṭhita nirvāṇa*, the localized or abiding *nirvāṇa* of the *Theravāda* *arhat* (enlightened one), who enters *parinirvāṇa* at his time of death, and dwells there forever. There is also *svabhāva nirvāṇa* (inherent or natural state *nirvāṇa*), the primal *nirvāṇa* or state of being that is eternally present, whether realized or not.

Most, if not all, of these distinctions are later and largely conceptual or doctrinal elaborations. In the earliest texts, for example, *nirvāṇa* and *parinirvāṇa* are used synonymously. Indeed, the Tibetan Buddhist teacher Gampopa (c. 1079–1153) agrees that *nirvāṇa* is:

that which cannot be conceptualized as existence or nonexistence,  
being beyond the world of the intellect and devoid of all possibility  
of verbalization.

*Gampopa, Jewel Ornament of Liberation 100a, JOLG p.214*

More extensively, but in the same vein, Huìnéng (638–713), the sixth patriarch of Chinese *Chán* Buddhism, responds to the monk Jítáo regarding a question on the nature of *nirvāṇa*:

The supreme *mahāparinirvāṇa* is perfect,  
permanent, calm, radiantly illuminative.  
Common and ignorant people miscall it death,  
while heretics arbitrarily declare it to be annihilation.  
Those who belong to *Hinayāna* and *Madhyamaka*  
regard *nirvāṇa* as non-action.

All these are merely intellectual speculations,  
 and they form the basis of the sixty-two fallacious views.  
 Since they are merely names, invented for the occasion,  
 they have nothing to do with absolute Truth.  
 Only those of super-eminent mind  
 can understand thoroughly what *nirvāṇa* is,  
 and adopt an attitude toward it  
 of neither attachment nor indifference.  
 They know that the five aggregates (*skandhas*),  
 and the so-called self arising from the aggregates,  
 together with all external forms and objects,  
 and the various phenomena of words and voice,  
 are all equally unreal, like a dream or an illusion. . . .

The patriarch then said to Jitáo, “I am trying to describe to you something that is intrinsically ineffable, in order to help you to get rid of fallacious views. If you do not interpret my words too literally, you may perhaps understand a little of *nirvāṇa*.”

Jitáo became highly enlightened and in a rapturous mood he made obeisance and departed.

*Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch 6, in BBDG pp.295–96*

Leaving aside conceptual ramifications, many Buddhist definitions of *nirvāṇa* simply emphasize the elimination of everything that is not *nirvāṇa* itself. It might seem easy to relinquish all that is negative, yet those who have sincerely tried it have discovered how persistent negative traits can be. Even so:

The extinction of lust (*rāga*), the extinction of anger (*dosa*), the extinction of delusion (*moha*): this, indeed, is called *nibbāna*.

*Samyutta Nikāya 38:1, Nibbāna Sutta, PTSS4 p.251; cf. in WBOB p.28*

This, truly, is peace; this is the highest, namely the stilling of all activities, the forsaking of everything that leads to rebirth, the fading away of craving and detachment – extinction, *nibbāna*.

*Anguttara Nikāya 3:32, Devadūtavagga, PTSA1 p.133; cf. WBOB p.28*

Enraptured with lust (*rāga*), enraged with anger (*dosa*), blinded by delusion (*moha*), overwhelmed, with mind ensnared, man aims at his own ruin, at the ruin of others, at the ruin of both; and he experiences mental pain and grief. But if lust, anger and delusion are given up, man aims neither at his own ruin, nor at the ruin of others, nor at the ruin of both; and he experiences no mental pain and grief. Thus is *nibbāna* immediate, visible in this life, inviting, attractive, and comprehensible to the wise.

*Anguttara Nikāya 3:55, Brāhmaṇavagga, PTSA1 p.159, in WBOB p.28*

In a sense, however, since all that is not *nirvāṇa* is illusory, having no real existence, there is actually nothing to extinguish or eliminate – only something to be realized. *Nirvāṇa* is the realization of the no-thing-ness underlying all things. *Nirvāṇa* is therefore already present in all places, even in the depths of *samsāra*. It is simply a letting go of all that is unreal:

There is nothing to be removed and nothing to be posited.  
It is seeing Reality as Reality;  
And when one sees thus, one is liberated.

*Nam mkha' rin po che'i mdo', in Jewel Ornament of Liberation, JOLG p.215*

But whatever concepts and philosophical frameworks are used to describe it, ultimately, *nirvāṇa* is something that simply cannot be grasped by the human mind:

*Nirvāṇa* is not born, neither does it grow old; it does not die, nor does it pass away; it has no rebirth; it is unconquerable; thieves cannot carry it off; it is not attached to anything; it is the sphere in which *arhats* (noble ones, enlightened ones) move; nothing can obstruct it, and it is infinite.

*Questions of King Milinda (80) 4:8.71, PTSQ p.321; cf. SBE36 p.193*

Understandably, the quest for *nirvāṇa*, however it may be understood, is regarded as the primary goal of human existence. As a yogic text observes:

When this body, obtained through *karma*, is made the means of obtaining *nirvāṇa*, only then does the carrying of the burden of the body bear fruit – not otherwise.

*Shiva Saṃhitā 2:49; cf. SSV p.22*

Although the term is well known and all agree that *nirvāṇa* refers to the highest state of spiritual enlightenment and freedom, there is no consensus of opinion as to exactly what this entails. Different schools of thought conceptualize and intellectualize *nirvāṇa* in different ways. Much of the debate focuses on what, if anything, remains after the individual self has been extinguished. Hindu philosophy sees *nirvāṇa* as the freedom and supreme bliss of the soul (*ātman*) when it realizes its own true nature. The soul continues in existence, although it has become one with *Brahman*, the Divine, and has lost all sense of an individual existence. This is regarded as a positive view of *nirvāṇa*, while complete extinction of self is regarded as a negative view.

Jain and Hindu philosophy are similar, understanding *nirvāṇa* to come about specifically when the last seeds of *karma* have been destroyed (which is also an accepted aspect of Hindu philosophy). Buddhist schools vary between the extinction and non-extinction viewpoints. Some Buddhists



have even credited Buddha with the view that *nirvāṇa* as extinction of the personal self was a “pernicious heresy”.<sup>2</sup> An early Buddhist refrain relates to the derivation of *nirvāṇa* as ‘he who has been cooled’:

Illusion (*moha*) has utterly passed from me:  
now I am cool, all fire within gone out.

*Theragāthā* 1:79, PTST p.12; cf. PEBB p.77

In this sense, *nirvāṇa* is understood as the state in which the coals of desire have completely burnt out. This is not extinction, but freedom or liberation.

Buddhists and others have also debated whether there is any ultimate or divine Ground of Being to which *nirvāṇa* can be equated. Commonly quoted in this context is a verse attributed to the Buddha from the *Udāna*, which suggests that such a ‘place’ does exist, but that it lies beyond the three worlds of *kāmaloka* (world of desire), *rūpaloka* (world of forms, patterns or archetypes), and *arūpaloka* (formless world). In Buddhist cosmology, these three worlds are further subdivided into thirty-one planes of existence, including the hell worlds, this world, and the lower and higher heavenly realms; but *nirvāṇa* is beyond them all:

There is, O monks, that realm (*āyatana*, place, dimension)  
where there is neither earth, nor water, nor fire, nor wind,  
neither the realm of boundless space (*ākāśānañcāyatana*),  
nor the realm of boundless consciousness (*viññāṇaṇcāyatana*),  
nor the realm of no-thingness (*ākīñcaṇñāyatana*),  
nor the realm of neither-knowing-nor-not-knowing  
(*nevasaññā-nāsaññāyatana*),  
neither this world, nor another world,  
neither sun, nor moon.

And there, I say, there is neither coming, nor going, nor staying,  
neither passing away nor arising.

It is unestablished, unevolving, unsupported.

This, just this, is the end of suffering (*dukkha*). . .

There is an Unborn, an Unoriginated,  
an Unmade, an Uncompounded;

Were there not, O monks, there would be no escape  
from the world of the born, the originated,  
the made and the compounded.

*Udāna* 8:1, 3, *Nibbāna Sutta*, PTSU pp.80–81; cf. KNJ, KNTB, in SHI p.181

A later notion is that of the *Ādi-Buddha* (Primal Buddha), the self-existent, uncreated, self-emanating, self-originating *buddha* that is beyond mental concepts and verbal definitions, without beginning or end, pre-existing

everything else that exists. The *Ādi-Buddha* is regarded as the foundation of all and the primordial Essence of enlightenment. The concept is associated mostly with the later *Mahāyāna* tradition and particularly with *Vajrayāna* or tantric Buddhism, especially of Tibet.

Ultimately, since there can be only one supreme Reality, the Hindu, Buddhist and Jain *nirvāṇa* must all point to the same experience. This experience must be the same for all human beings, whatever their beliefs; it is only human concepts, descriptions, and speculations that vary. It is no surprise therefore that when the Buddha was asked, “What is *nirvāṇa*?”, he replied simply that it is “incomprehensible, indescribable, inconceivable, unutterable”.<sup>3</sup> The Buddha’s main emphasis appears to have been the practical path for the spiritual seeker to follow, rather than descriptions of the indescribable. When the early Buddhist teacher Nāgasena was asked a similar question by King Milinda, Nāgasena countered it with one of his own:

“*Nirvāṇa* exists, O king; *nirvāṇa* is cognizable to the mind. A noble disciple, faring along rightly with a mind that is purified, lofty, straight, without hindrances, without temporal desires, can attain *nirvāṇa*.”

“But what, revered sir, is that *nirvāṇa* like? Can it be illustrated by similes? Convince me with reasons, inasmuch as such a thing can be illustrated by similes.”

“Is there, O king, a thing that is called wind?”

“Yes, of course.”

“Well then, O king, pray show the wind to me – whether by colour or form, or as thick or thin, or as long or short.”

“But it is not possible, revered Nāgasena, for the wind to be shown like that; for the wind cannot be grasped in the hand or touched. Nevertheless, it exists.”

“But if, O king, it is not possible for you to show me the wind – well then, there can be no such thing!”

“But I know that wind exists, revered Nāgasena; I am convinced of it, even though I cannot show it to you.”

“Even so, O king, *nirvāṇa* does exist, even though it is not possible to show it to you in colour or form.”

“Very good, revered Nāgasena, the simile is well presented and the reasoning well understood. It is so, and I accept it as you say.”

*Questions of King Milinda* (65) 4:7.17–18, PTSQ pp.270–71;

cf. SBE36 pp.106–7, in TCBB p.115

It is believed that the Buddha himself did not permit his teachings to be written down during his lifetime, making it difficult to know how he described *nibbāna*. Even in the *Dhammapada*, one of the earliest Buddhist texts, the Buddha is more interested in teaching the path to the attainment of *nibbāna* (Pa) rather than trying to explain its nature. The Way, says the Buddha, is through meditation:

They who meditate with perseverance,  
 always constant in their effort,  
 attain the freedom and joy of supreme *nibbāna*.

*Dhammapada 2:3*

Unremitting personal vigilance is also essential:

Those who are ever heedful,  
 who are self-disciplined, day and night,  
 who are entirely focused on *nibbāna* –  
 Their impurities are removed.

*Dhammapada 17:6*

For the attainment of *nibbāna*, the Buddha counsels the elimination of all desires:

Empty the boat, O *bhikkhu* (monk):  
 for empty, it will travel lightly.  
 Eliminate lust (*rāga*) and hatred (*doṣa*),  
 then you will find *nibbāna*.

*Dhammapada 25:10*

And:

Make yourself as silent as a broken gong,  
 and you will attain *nibbāna*;  
 For agitation will be unknown to you.

*Dhammapada 15:6*

In a play on words, the Buddha likens desires to the trees in a forest (*vana*). He says that his followers (*bhikkhus*) should become *nib-bana* (without the forest of desires). Then they will “find *nibbāna*”:

Fell the entire forest (*vana*), not the tree alone,  
 for danger dwells in the forest (*vana*).  
 O *bhikkhus*, felling all the trees, large and small,  
 find *nibbāna*.

*Dhammapada 20:11*

In Indian philosophy and *yoga*, *nirvāṇa* is the direct experience by the ego-less self of the blissful *Brahman*, of complete absorption of the soul in *Brahman*. The *Bhagavad Gītā* calls it *brahmanirvāṇa* – extinction (of the ego) or beatitude in *Brahman*. Kṛishṇa, as the personification of the Divine, is talking to his devotee Arjuna:

Whoever, abandoning attachment,  
lives without a sense of ‘me’ and ‘mine’ –  
He attains peace.

This, O Pārtha, is the state of dwelling in *Brahman*.  
Having attained it, a man is no more deluded.  
By remaining in that state until the time of death,  
he attains extinction in *Brahman* (*brahmanirvāṇa*).  
*Bhagavad Gītā* 2:71–72

The *yogī* whose happiness is within,  
who rests in joy within,  
and who likewise experiences the light within –  
Having become *Brahman*,  
attains beatitude in *Brahman* (*brahmanirvāṇa*).  
Those who are without imperfection,  
whose doubts have been dispelled,  
who have control over themselves,  
and who rejoice in the good of everyone –

Truly, those attain extinction in *Brahman* (*brahmanirvāṇa*).  
To those self-controlled ones  
who are free from lust and anger,  
who have control over their minds,  
and who know their real nature to be the soul (*ātman*) –  
the attainment of extinction in *Brahman* (*brahmanirvāṇa*)  
is close at hand.

*Bhagavad Gītā* 5:24–26

With a mind restrained from going out to external things,  
always united with the supreme Spirit (*Ātman*)  
in spiritual communion,  
the *yogī* attains supreme extinction (*paramanirvāṇa*),  
peace, and enduring establishment in Me.

*Bhagavad Gītā* 6:15

Among other Hindu texts, the *Subāla Upanishad* repeats a similar refrain at the end of a number of its sections: “This is the teaching concerning *nirvāṇa*. This is the teaching of the *Veda*.” These teachings include:

The Self (*Ātman*) is all-knowing. It is the Lord of all. It is the ruler of all. It is the indwelling Spirit. It is the Source of all. . . . The unborn One abides forever in the secret place within the body. . . . All the worlds, like so many beads, are established in the Self, in *Brahman* as

warp and woof. . . . He who knows this becomes the Self Itself. . . . In the Supreme, there is neither existence (*sat*) nor nonexistence (*asat*), nor both existence and nonexistence. This is the teaching concerning *nirvāṇa*. This is the teaching of the *Veda*.

*Subāla Upanishad* 5:15, 7:1, 10:1, 11:1; cf. *PU* pp.873, 876, 885, 887

This can be compared to the Buddhist teaching in the *Udāna*, where the Buddhist *diṭṭhadhamma nibbāna* (*nibbāna* here and now) also seems equivalent to the Hindu *jīvanmukti* (liberation while living). Truly recognizing the impermanence of the world and of false identification with it leads to freedom from I-ness, and consequently to *nibbāna*. This recognition is far more than mere intellectual realization:

The perception of impermanence should be cultivated for the removal of the conceit, “I am.” For when one perceives impermanence, the perception of not-Self is established. When one perceives not-Self, one reaches the removal of the conceit, “I am.” This is called *diṭṭhadhamma nibbāna*.

*Udāna* 4, *Meghiya Sutta*, *PTSU* p.37; cf. *KNJ*

Indian *sants*, who characteristically express things in simple, non-intellectual language, have also spoken on the subject. Explaining Buddha’s *nirvāṇa* from the *sant*’s perspective, the twentieth-century mystic Maharaj Charan Singh replies to a question:

By *nirvāṇa* he means release of the soul from the mind. That is *nirvāṇa*. But why to get release of soul from the mind? Just to merge back into the Ocean. He does not mention about the Ocean, but when water, by evaporation, leaves the dirt, whether it is conscious of the cloud or not, it will go back and merge into the cloud. Now, if the water in the dirt is told, “Leave the dirt, for you are not dirt. You are something else,” and it leaves the dirt, though it is not told at all about its origin, the cloud, even then it will go back and merge into the cloud. Similarly, perhaps, the disciples were not plainly told about the Lord or about God. They were just told to look to their *karmas* and look to their *nirvāṇa*, to get release of their soul from the mind. But where then will the soul go? Again, surely, to its origin.

*Maharaj Charan Singh, The Master Answers, MA* p.29

Buddhism does not countenance the existence of a soul as a separate entity, but since, in the above context, according to Maharaj Charan Singh’s interpretation, the soul loses itself and its identity in the divine Ocean, the difference in expression is only a matter of concepts, not reality.

Other *sants* have similarly described *nirvāṇa* in a simple manner. Speaking of the condition of the soul as it merges into the divine Essence, Dariyā Sāhib says:

It is the state of *nirbān*, an abode of pure love,  
there is thunder above and below in the sky.  
The drop (the soul) merges into the ocean of Divinity.

Fragrant aroma arises from blossoming flowers,  
and with the divine eye you see your true home.  
Says Dariyā, receiving inner secrets from the *satguru*,  
the *hansas* (pure souls) reach the boundless abode.

*Dariyā Sāhib, Shabd 8:8, DG1 p.109; cf. DSSK p.202*

Nāmdev says the same:

O my tongue, other occupations are false: ...  
*nirbāṇ pad* comes only through (repeating) the Lord's Name.

*Nāmdev, Ādi Granth 1163, AGK*

Kabīr adds that although the real *nirvāṇa* is the eternal home of the soul, there are imitations of this stage lower down. *Kāl* ('Time', 'Death') is the negative power in creation, according to descriptions of the *sants*, while *sunṇ*, *aṇḍa* and *sohang* refer to different stages on the inner journey:

He has made the fourth *sunṇ* in *aṇḍa*  
as an imitation of the *nirbān* stage.  
*Kāl* appears there as *satguru*,  
that is termed *sohang*.

*Kabīr, Shabdāvalī 1, Bhed Bānī, Shabd 23:7, KSS1 p.68*

Indian *sants* have not been the only ones to interpret the Buddha's *nirvāṇa* as the eternal home of the soul. The third-century Persian mystic Mānī, who had travelled in India, taught that the Buddha, Zarathushtra and Jesus had all been perfect saviours. In the writings of his disciples and later Manichaeans, *nirvāṇa* is used as a term for the eternal realm. In manuscripts found in Chinese Turkestan, the devotee says that it is the divine Father who leads the soul to *nirvāṇa*:

Our eternally living Father, venerable Lord of Light,  
who remains self-contained, mysteriously and secretly,  
in the place of the great light,  
who is higher than heaven and men –  
the free Being, who lives in dignity in the unchanging country –

For His own nature's sake, He opens the gate of Wisdom (*huìmén*),  
and lets us feel the affinity of Life, the road to *nirvāṇa* (*nièpán*).

*Mónjiào xiàbù zàn*, T54 2140:1275b12–14; cf. *LSMH* (223–24) p.195

Likewise, begging the saints (the “sons of light”) to grant salvation to those who long for it, the devotee prays:

Industriously heal the wounds and painful tumours  
of those who have long been hoping dejectedly  
for deliverance and protection.  
Pray be merciful and receive them  
in Reality and Truth (*zhēnshí*).  
Quickly return them to the Lord in their natural state.

The noble race has wandered about for many years:  
Return them swiftly to their native land,  
the place of peace and happiness;  
O graceful and upright sons of light,  
you of perfect form, extract them soon  
from this storehouse of greed and desire.  
Seek precious treasures in the deep and gloomy ocean of pain,  
and hasten to offer them  
to the clean and pure Lord of *nirvāṇa* (*nièpán*).

*Mónjiào xiàbù zàn*, T54 2140:1276a7–11; cf. *LSMH* (250–52) pp.197–98

The Jain perception of *nirvāṇa* is again that of the highest state of being. The *Samansuttam*, a modern *sūtra* compiled as a synthesis of Jain teaching and accepted by both of the two main Jain schools, speaks of faith, mystic knowledge or gnosis, and good conduct as the foundations of meditation and spiritual practice that leads to the destruction of *karma* and the realization of *nibbāna*:

Without right faith, there can be no right knowledge;  
Without right knowledge, there can be no right conduct;  
Without right conduct, there can be no release from *karma*;  
Without release of *karma*, there can be no *nibbāna*.

*Samansuttam* 211; cf. *SSJV*

More specifically, on the path to the attainment of *nirvāṇa*, the Jain *āchārya* Kundakunda (traditionally dated to C2nd–3rd CE) speaks of three levels of ‘self’. There is the “outer self”, which consists of the body, the senses and so on, none of which constitute the real or true self; and there is the “inner self”, which contemplates upon and ultimately becomes the highest and

“pure Self”, the “*Paramātman*”. *Nirvāṇa* is the shedding of all *karma*, the relinquishing of all that is not the true self, and the realization of the supreme *Paramātman*. One who has attained such realization, says Kundakunda, is a “divine being”, a *Jina* (conqueror). The meditation by which this *nirvāṇa* is realized is founded upon faith, gnosis, and good conduct:

Faith, knowledge, and conduct –

learn these three with the greatest devotion.

Knowing these, the *yogīs* soon attain *nirvāṇa*. . .

I bow before that divine being who,

shedding all *karma*, and discarding non-self,

has realized the Self as consisting of gnosis.

Having bowed to that Being

of infinite gnosis and vision and purity,

I will speak of *Paramātman*,

which is the highest state reached by the best of *yogīs*;

Knowing and always experiencing which,

the *yogī*, poised in meditation, attains *nirvāṇa* –

a state free from suffering, everlasting, and incomparable.

The self is of three kinds:

the *Paramātman*, the inner self, and the outer self;

Putting aside the latter, the *Paramātman*

is to be meditated upon by the inner self:

Discard, therefore, the outer self,

which consists of the senses *etc.*;

The inner self clearly realizes its true character,

which, freed from the taint of *karma*,

is the *Paramātman* or divine Being.

It is free from impurity, free from the body, free from the senses,

the absolute and pure Self, poised at the highest stage,

the great Conqueror, the Saviour, the Everlasting, the Perfect.

Absorbed in the inner self and discarding the outer self,

meditate on *Paramātman*:

Thus has the best of *Jinas* (Jain saviours) taught. . .

The *yogī* who is indifferent to the body, undistracted,

unattached, unencumbered, and absorbed in the true Self,

attains *nirvāṇa*. . .

Those who, turning away from non-Self,

meditate upon the true Self are men of right conduct;

Taking to the path of the great *Jinas*, they attain *nirvāṇa*.



Those who meditate on the Self,  
 have pure vision and strength of character,  
 and are indifferent to the senses, assuredly attain *nirvāṇa*.  
 Because attachment to non-self is the cause of mundane existence,  
 therefore the *yogī* always contemplates the Self.

*Kundakunda, Aṣṭapāhuḍa 3:40, 6:1–7, 12, 19, 70–71; cf. APAK*

See also: **bodhi**, **kaivalya**, **moksha**, **mukti**.

1. *Dīgha Nikāya* 16, *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta*, PTSD2 pp.81, 91, 123.
2. *Saṃyutta Nikāya* 2:85, *Yamaka Sutta*, PTSS3 p.109.
3. Unsourced, in Huston Smith, *The World's Religions*, WRHS p.113.

**nirvikalpa jñāna**, **nirvikalpaka jñāna** (S), **rnam par mi rtog pa'i ye shes** (T), **wú fēnbié zhì** (C), **mu funbetsu chī** (J) *Lit.* awareness (*jñāna*) without (*nis*) difference (*vikalpa*); knowledge (*ye shes*) entirely (*rnam par*) without (*mi*) thought (*rtog pa*); knowledge (*zhì, chī*) without (*wú, mu*) differentiation (*fēnbié, funbetsu*); unconditioned knowledge; mystical knowledge or gnosis without distinction or duality; awareness without any overlay of the duality of knower and known that is normally present in other forms of awareness or knowing; undifferentiated, non-conceptual, directly experiential, mystical gnosis or knowledge of Reality; pure awareness in the absence of concepts, judgments and discriminative thinking; also called *nirvikalpa bodha* (unconditioned wisdom) and *nirvikalpa chitta* (unconditioned mind).

*Nirvikalpa jñāna* is contrasted with *savikalpa* or *savikalpaka jñāna*, which is conceptual or intellectual knowledge concerning all the details and qualities of a thing derived from discriminative and analytical thinking, and which obscures the pure awareness of *nirvikalpa jñāna*. These terms are prevalent in Buddhist, Jain and Indian epistemology where the matter is a subject of debate, with various schools and individuals adopting different intellectual and conceptual positions. In the Buddhist *Yogācāra* school, though not exclusively, *nirvikalpa jñāna* is the gnosis of enlightenment (*bodhi*), in which there is none of the duality by which unenlightened beings view the world.

*Nirvikalpa* is also used to describe the fixed, focused or concentrated state of mind, unperturbed and not given to rambling, that is achieved by means of meditation. It also describes direct perception and realization of Reality, in the absence of the distortions of conceptual, discursive, and dualistic thought (*vikalpa*). It occurs in terms mostly used in Jain and Buddhist epistemology such as: *nirvikalpa anubhava* (unwavering perception, unperturbed self-realization); *nirvikalpa upayoga* (unconditioned consciousness); *nirvikalpa pratyaksha* (unconditioned, direct perception); and *nirvikalpa dhyāna* (unperturbed meditation). For each of these, there is a corresponding

*savikalpa* state of mind or consciousness. *Nirvikalpa* and *nirvikalpaka* are used synonymously with *avikalpa* and *avikalpaka*, *a-* and *nis-* both being negative prefixes.

See also: **nirvikalpa samādhi**.

**nirvikalpa samādhi, nirvikalpaka samādhi** (S/H) *Lit.* absorption (*samādhi*) without (*nis*) difference (*vikalpa*); absorption without distinction or duality; pure and unconditioned absorption in divine consciousness, devoid of all limitations and imaginings, transcending all limitations of the mind; changeless absorption; *samādhi* in which there is no consciousness of individual self or ego; the highest *samādhi* of traditional *yoga*, in which the seeker merges into the eternal, absolute and unconditioned (*nirvikalpa*) *Brahman*, as a lump of sugar dissolves in an ocean and loses its identity; the state of superconsciousness in which the soul realizes, “I am *Brahman*,” the state in which the *tripuṭi* (triad) of the knower, the known, and the knowing are all merged into one, in *Brahman*; also called *asamprajñāta* (without anything known), *avikalpa* (without alteration), or *nirbīja* (seedless) *samādhi*.

*Nirvikalpa samādhi* is contrasted with *savikalpa* or *savikalpaka* (with conditions, with awareness, with self-consciousness) *samādhi*, in which the impression of the *tripuṭi* still lingers, and there is still some trace of I-ness. In the former, it merges into *Brahman*, completely losing its identity; in the latter, the soul attains union with *Brahman*. *Savikalpa samādhi* is still blissful, but the soul must move on to the higher state. According to the *Vedāntasāra*:

*Nirvikalpa samādhi* is complete merging in *Brahman*, the One without a second, of the mind that has identified with It, the distinction of knower, knowledge, and the object of knowledge being thus eliminated.

Thus it has been said: “... Do not linger on the bliss that comes from the *savikalpa samādhi*, but be unattached through discrimination.”<sup>1</sup>

*Sadānanda, Vedāntasāra* 197, 215; cf. *VSY* pp.110, 116

*Nirvikalpa samādhi* requires freedom from four obstacles: torpidity or inertia (*laya*), distraction (*vikshepa*), attachment (*kashāya*), and enjoyment (*rasāsvāda*):

When the mind, free from these four obstacles, rests unmoved, like the flame of a lamp sheltered from the wind, at one with absolute Consciousness, it is called *nirvikalpa samādhi*.

*Sadānanda, Vedāntasāra* 214; cf. *VSY* pp.115–16

Writing of this *nirvikalpa* state of consciousness, Shankara portrays it as the ultimate and final experience:

Even a wise man cannot suddenly destroy egoism after it has once become strong, except for those who are perfectly still through *nirvikalpa samādhi*. Desires are verily the effect of innumerable births. . . .

When the *Ātman* (Self), the One without a second, is realized by means of *nirvikalpa samādhi*, then the heart's knot of ignorance is totally destroyed. . . .

Owing to the diversity of the intervening limitations (*upādhis*), a man is apt to think of himself as also full of diversity; but with their elimination he is again his own Self, the Immutable. Therefore, the wise man should always devote himself to the practice of *nirvikalpa samādhi* for elimination of the *upādhis*. . . .

When the mind, . . . purified by constant practice, is merged in *Brahman*, then *samādhi* passes from the *savikalpa* to the *nirvikalpa* stage, and leads directly to realization of the bliss of *Brahman*, the One without a second.

By this *samādhi*, all desires, which are like knots, are destroyed and all work comes to an end. Then, both within and without, the spontaneous manifestation of one's real nature is seen everywhere and at all times.

Reflection (*manana*) should be regarded as a hundred times superior to hearing (*shruti*), and meditation (*nididhyāsana*) a hundred thousand times superior even to reflection; but *nirvikalpaka* (*samādhi*) is infinite in nature (and cannot be compared with them).

By *nirvikalpaka samādhi* the truth of *Brahman* is clearly and definitely realized, but not otherwise; for then the mind, being unstable by nature, is liable to be distracted by other perceptions. . . .

The wise man realizes in his heart, through *samādhi*, the infinite *Brahman*, which is of the nature of eternal knowledge and absolute bliss, which has no exemplar, which transcends all limitations, is ever free and always still, and which is like the limitless sky – indivisible, and absolute (*nirvikalpa*). . . .

Consciousness that is continuously aware of the unity of the self (*ātman*) and *Brahman*, that is purified of all coverings, that is free from duality (*nirvikalpa*), and that concerns itself only with pure intelligence (*chinnmātrā*) is called illumination. He who is well established in this consciousness is called a man of steady illumination.

Shankara, *Vivekachūḍāmaṇi* 342, 353, 357, 362–65, 408, 427;

cf. *VCSM* pp.130, 134, 136–39, 154, 162, in *SHI* p.264

Swami Vivekananda describes something of the stages through which one passes on the way to this highest *samādhi*:

Clear comprehension, inward realization, is no small matter. . . . When the mind proceeds towards self-absorption in *Brahman*, it passes through all these stages one by one to reach the absolute (*nirvikalpa*) state at last. In the process of entering into *samādhi*, first the universe appears as one mass of ideas; then the whole thing loses itself in a profound “*Aum*”. Then even that melts away, even that seems to be between being and non-being. That is the experience of the eternal *Nāda* (Sound). And then the mind becomes lost in the reality of *Brahman*, and then it is done! All is peace!

*Swami Vivekananda, Conversations, CWSV6 pp.498–99*

See also: **samādhi**, **savikalpa samādhi**.

1. Gauḍapāda, *Kārikā* 3:45 on *Māṇḍūkya Upanishad*.

**nishchal(a)** (S/H), **nihchal** (Pu) *Lit.* without (*nish*) movement (*chala*); still, fixed, steady, unwavering, quiet, immovable, unchanging; hence also, eternal, and thus an epithet of the Divine; also used to describe the state of the mind in perfected meditation:

When your mind,  
bewildered by confusing scriptural doctrines,  
finds rest in steady (*nishchala*)  
and unwavering *samādhi* (absorption),  
then you will have attained real *yoga*.

*Bhagavad Gītā* 2:53

The mind being free from attachment, and undistracted,  
attains an unmoving (*nishchala*) state.  
The wise realize such a mind to be *Brahman*.  
It is undifferentiated, birthless, and without duality.

*Gauḍapāda, Kārikā* 4:80 on *Māṇḍūkya Upanishad*

The stillness of the supreme Self (*Brahman*, *Ātman*) can only be discerned by a mind and body that have become completely still:

That which is free from differentiation, which exists forever, which is still (*nishchala*), like an ocean without waves, the ever free, of indivisible form – you are that *Brahman*. Meditate on That in your mind. . . .

Even a wise man cannot suddenly destroy egoism after it has once become strong, except for those who are perfectly still (*nishchala*) through *nirvikalpa samādhi*. . . .

Fixing the mind firmly on *Brahman*, and controlling the external organs in their respective centres; with the body held still (*nishchala*), taking no thought for its maintenance; attaining identity with *Brahman* and becoming one with It – always drink joyfully of the bliss of *Brahman* within your own self, unceasingly. What is the use of other things that are entirely hollow? . . .

Fixing the purified mind within your own self upon the Witness, the absolute Knowledge, and slowly making it still (*nishchala*), realize your own infinite Self. . . .

Through *samādhi* in which the self (*ātman*) has been made perfectly still (*vinishchala*), visualize the Truth of the Self (*Ātman*) with the eye of wisdom (*bodha-chakshus*) opened. . . .

Verily, I am *Brahman*, the One without a second, which is the support of all, which illumines all things, which has infinite forms, is omnipresent, devoid of multiplicity, eternal, pure, still (*nishchala*), and absolute.

*Shankara, Vivekachūḍāmaṇi 259, 342, 378, 383, 473, 513;*

*cf. VCSM pp.101, 130, 143–45, 176, 191*

By dwelling on the divine Eternity, the soul finds its own innate eternity:

Those who meditate on the one Lord find eternal peace (*sukh*):  
their power is eternal (*nishchal*) and unfailing.

*Guru Amardās, Ādi Granth 1057, AGK*

See also: **nishchala** (2.1).

**nishchint(a)** (S/H), **nehchint** (H), **nichind** (Pu) *Lit.* without (*nish*) thought (*chint*); without worry or care, worryless, carefree, unconcerned; the state of a soul who has surrendered to God. The ninth-century philosopher and mystic Shankara maintains that it is a condition of liberation:

He whose cares about the phenomenal world have been quelled; who, though possessed of a body consisting of divided parts is yet undivided; and whose mind is free from anxiety (*vinishchinta*) – he is accepted as a *jīvanmukta* (liberated while still living).

*Shankara, Vivekachūḍāmaṇi 430; cf. VCSM p.163*

According to the *Nārada Bhakti Sūtras* it is also a condition of devotion to God:

The blessed Lord (*Bhagavān*) alone is always to be adored and worshipped by those who are free from all cares (*nishchinta*) and worries, in all aspects of their lives. Being thus glorified, He speedily manifests Himself to His devotees, bringing them realization.

*Nārada Bhakti Sūtras 79–80; cf. NBST p.22*

Therefore, Ravidās advises:

Let the tongue always repeat the Lord's name,  
and let the hands be ever engaged in work.  
Says Ravidās, this is how I became carefree (*nehchint*):  
now the Lord will take care of me.

*Ravidās, Darshan, Nishkām karma bhāvanā, Pad 114, RD p.117*

And likewise Guru Nānak:

Leave behind sexual desire, anger, and the slander of others.  
Renounce greed and possessiveness, and become carefree (*nichind*).

*Guru Nānak, Ādi Granth 1041, AGK*

See also: **achint**.

**nīst, nīstī** (P) *Lit.* nonbeing, nonexistence, annihilation; contrasted with *hast* (existence); used synonymously with *adam*, which is generally contrasted with *wujūd* (existence); commonly used to mean the unconditioned, formless oneness of the Divine, as opposed to the unreal existence in duality of all things in creation; or, conversely, the essential nonexistence or unreality of all things in creation, when contrasted with the real existence of the Divine; also, the nonexistence of the individual who has attained selflessness, the annihilation (*fanā'* or *nīst*) of the self. In the latter sense, *nīst* and *fanā'* are more or less synonymous, though *fanā'* is the commoner term.

The saint who has died to self dwells in nonexistence (*nīst*); the egotist, the individual who is limited to his petty, physically bound self, is *hast*. Since the only real Being is God, the seeker cannot see God or serve as a mirror for His glories as long as he is bound by individuality. Rūmī urges the seeker to annihilate the self and bring his resultant nonbeing (*nīstī*) as his gift before the Divine, so that He will bestow His generosity:

What is the mirror of Being (*Hastī*)? – nonbeing (*nīstī*).  
Bring nonbeing (*nīstī*) as your gift, if you are no fool.  
Being (*Hastī*) can only be seen in nonbeing (*nīstī*):  
the rich bestow generosity on the poor.  
The clear mirror of bread is truly a hungry man;

Tinder, likewise, is the mirror of that from which fire is struck.  
Nonbeing (*nīstī*) and defect, wherever they arise,  
are the mirrors that display the excellence of all crafts.

*Rūmī, Maṣnavī I:3201–4; cf. MJR2 p.174*

Rūmī says that many people, consciously or unconsciously, recognize the material world to be a “snare”, brought about by the sense of individuality. They therefore try various methods to gain some peace by losing themselves in an illusory and temporary nonexistence and forgetfulness of self, either in intoxication or by absorption in some activity. But he cites the *Qur’ān*, which says that neither the *jinn* nor human beings can break out of this world without divine guidance:<sup>1</sup>

Everyone in the world is fleeing from free will  
and self-existence to drunkenness.  
In order that for a while  
they may be delivered from sobriety (self-consciousness),  
they lay upon themselves the ignominy of wine and song.  
Everyone recognizes that this existence (*hastī*) is a snare,  
that self-willed thought and memory are hell.  
But, O well-conducted man, they flee from selfhood into selflessness  
either by means of intoxication  
or by means of some engrossing occupation.

O God, draw back the soul  
from that (illusory) state of nonbeing (*nīstī*),  
because it entered into that unconsciousness without Your command.  
Neither for the *jinn*, nor for mankind is it possible  
to break out of the prison of the regions of the temporal world.  
There is no piercing through the vault of the highest heavens  
save by the power of guidance.

*Rūmī, Maṣnavī VI:224–30; cf. MJR6 p.270*

In his *Dīvān*, he writes:

I am so submerged in Nonexistence (*Nīstī*),  
that my beloved keeps saying:  
“Come, sit with me a moment!” –  
but even that I cannot do.

*Rūmī, Dīvān-i Shams-i Tabrīz 1443:15274, KSD3 p.209; cf. in TSR p.310*

Rūmī is speaking of that Nonexistence which is beyond the illusory existence of phenomena and is actually the only real Existent – the divine Essence. So immersed in it has he become that not even a semblance of separateness

remains. The relationship of devotee and Divinity, lover and Beloved, is a relationship that pertains to the plane of duality and cannot subsist in the divine Unity, in which the lover becomes the Beloved Himself. Rūmī is saying that he is so submerged in this Unity that when invited by the Beloved to sit with Him, he cannot do so because ‘sitting with Him’ implies a lingering separateness that no longer exists. He encourages the lover to become entirely lost in the Beloved:

Endeavour through nonexistence (*nīst*) to become (truly) existent (*hast*)  
and to be intoxicated with God’s wine.

*Rūmī, Maṣnavī VI:643 (heading), MJR6 p.293*

It behoves us to be nonbeing (*nīst*)  
in the presence of His Being (*Hast*):  
In His presence what is our being (*hastī*)? Blind and blue.  
Were it not blind it would have been melted by Him:  
it would have known the heat of the divine Sun;  
And were it not blue from mourning (divine longing),  
how would this world have become frozen like ice?

*Rūmī, Maṣnavī I:518–20; cf. MJR2 p.31*

This is the means of ascent to the Divine:

What is the means of ascension to heaven? Nonbeing (*Nīstī*).  
Nonbeing (*Nīstī*) is the creed and religion of lovers.

*Rūmī, Maṣnavī VI:233; cf. MJR6 p.270*

A beloved asked her lover, “Whom do you love most – yourself or me?”

He replied, “I am dead to myself and living through you; I have become nonexistent (*nīst*) to myself and my own attributes, and existent (*hast*) through you; I have forgotten my own knowledge, and have become knowing through your knowledge; I have lost all thought of my own power, and have become powerful through your power. If I love myself, I must have loved you, and if I love you, I must have loved myself.”

Whoever possesses the mirror of inner vision sees God,  
even though he sees himself.

*Rūmī, Maṣnavī V:2020 (heading), MJR6 p.121*

Rūmī relates the story of a lover who is burning in longing and separation from the beloved, yet cannot understand the origin of his pain. His beloved points out that the pain is due to his sense of self. The lover has yet to completely die to self “and become nonexistent”:



There was a fire in him; he did not know what it was,  
 but on account of its heat he was weeping like a candle.  
 The beloved said, "You have done all this,  
 but open wide your ears and listen well:  
 You have not accomplished the root of the root  
 of love and devotion:  
 What you have done is but the branches."

The lover said, "Tell me, what is that root?"  
 She said, "To die and become nonexistent (*nīst*).  
 You have done everything else,  
 but you have not died, you are still living.  
 Listen! If you are a self-sacrificing friend, die!"

Instantly, he laid himself full length upon the ground,  
 and gave up the ghost:  
 Like the evanescent rose,  
 he gave away his head (life) laughing and rejoicing.  
 That laughter remained with him as an endowment unto everlasting,  
 like the untroubled spirit and reason of the mystic.

*Rūmī, Maṣnavī V: 1251–57; cf. MJR6 pp.76–77*

This state, says Ḥāfiẓ, is one of extreme bliss and spiritual intoxication. It is the fate of any soul who seeks the Divine Nonexistence:

That mystic (*‘ārīf*), who travelled  
 into the realm of Nonexistence (*Nīstī*), became intoxicated:  
 From the world of mysteries, he received intoxication.

*Ḥāfiẓ, Dīvān, DHM (79:4) p.103, DIH p.58; cf. DHWC (69:4) p.169*

Sa’dī, too, speaks of annihilation of the self in the Beloved. The self and all its associated passions and imperfections are a heavy burden to carry:

Egoism arises from wealth and position,  
 but annihilation (*nīstī*) of self is superior to selfhood.  
 Since the heavy-laden move with difficulty,  
 it is better to be unencumbered and free.  
 O Sa’dī, since dominion and sovereignty do not last,  
 humility is preferable.

*Sa’dī, Ṭayyibāt 72:3–5, KSSS p.259; cf. TOS p.105*

He says that having first exerted his sense of self, this self was then annihilated in "nonexistence". Having completely surrendered to the Beloved, he now seeks divine grace:

If at first I laid claim to existence (*hastī*),  
 I then underwent the punishment of nonexistence (*nīstī*),  
 and now I am hopeful of Your bounty,  
 for I am poor and helpless.

*Sa'dī, Tayyibāt 269:6, KSSS p.306, TOS p.367*

Therefore, he writes:

O Sa'dī! Submit to annihilation (*nīstī*):  
 that is the only resource against the strong-armed (beloved).

*Sa'dī, Badāyī' 19:10, KSSS p.350; cf. BOS p.23*

Sanā'ī portrays the soul as a pearl diver, seeking riches in the ocean of existence. He advises, leave “your clothing and your life” on the shores of the ocean of nonexistence of self if you want to find the riches of “eternal life”. Here, “unless” implies the conditional and relative existence of this world, at the heart of which lies the pearl of the Divine; “not (*lā*)” connotes the ‘nonexistence’ of the self:

O seeker of the pearl in the oyster of ‘unless’ (existence)  
 lay down your clothing and your life  
 on the shore of ‘not (*lā*)’.

God’s existence (*hast-yi Haqq*) inclines only towards he  
 who has ceased to exist:

Nonexistence (*nīstī*) is the necessary provision for the journey.

Until in annihilation (*nīstī*), you lay aside your cap (ego),  
 you will not set your face on the road to eternal life.

When you become nothing, you run towards God:  
 the path of the beggar leads up to Him.

If fortune crushes you down,  
 the most excellent of Creators will restore you.

Rise, and have done with false fables:

forsake your ignoble passions, and come hither.

*Sanā'ī, Ḥadīqat al-Ḥaqīqat 1, HHGP p.14, HHS p.77; cf. HHG pp.21–22*

See also: **fanā'**, **hast** (2.2), **nīst** (2.2).

1. *Qur'ān* 55:33.

**noēsis** (Gk) *Lit.* (direct) knowledge; intuitive knowledge; spiritual knowledge in which knower and known, the contemplator and the contemplated – both become one; contemplation; from the same root as *nous*, which represents both the divine Power itself and the divine essence of the soul. *Nous* has been used by various writers throughout the ages to mean spirit, soul,

or mind, which has inevitably led to some confusion, especially when these three English terms also have a range of meanings depending upon when and by whom they are used. The same is true of allied terms from the same root.

*Noēsis*, being activity of the *nous* at a stage where the soul has withdrawn from the body through the practice of meditation, is often contrasted with *dianoia* (discursive thinking, practical thought). *Logismos* (reasoning, discrimination) is a reflection of *noēsis*, at the physical, human level. It is the attempt to know something while still in the realm of material duality.

The soul can move in only two directions: when turned upward or inward it gives itself over to *noēsis*; when downward or outward, to sense perception (*aisthēsis*). As Plato says:

We must in my opinion begin by distinguishing between that which always is and has no becoming from that which is always becoming but never is. The one is apprehended by intuitive understanding (*noēsis*) with the aid of the *Logos* (Word), because it remains eternally in the same state; but that which is the object of opinion and irrational sensation is always in a process of coming into being and ceasing to be, and is never fully real.

*Plato, Timaeus 27d–28a; cf. DP3 pp.715–16, PTC p.40*

*Noēsis* is immediate in that the experience and the experiencer, “the knower and the known”, become one. This is a reflection of the self-sufficiency of the divine *Nous* (Spirit, divine Intelligence), of which the immortal aspect of the soul (*i.e. nous*) is a part, and from which the soul’s power of *noēsis* is derived:

The life and activity of the divine *Nous* (Spirit) is the primal Light shining primarily for Itself and shining upon Itself, at once illuminating and illuminated, that which is truly spiritual (*noēton*), both the knower and the known, seen by Itself and needing no other that It may see, supplying Itself with the power of seeing.

*Plotinus, Enneads 5:3.8; cf. PA5 pp.98–99, PEC p.220*

Contrasting *noēsis* and *dianoia* (discursive thinking) brings this aspect of *noēsis* into sharper focus. The *nous* can contemplate itself and know itself (*i.e. noēsis*), while the *psychē* (*i.e. mind*) “is other than its objects of perception and has a discursive thought process (*dianooumenē*) that perceives as if it were one thing looking at another”.<sup>1</sup>

*Noēsis* as a vision of the divine oneness is the faculty of the *nous*. This manifests itself in the lower soul as *logismos* (discrimination, reasoning), the faculty that makes judgments (*kriseis*) and applies synthesis (*synagōgē*) and division (*diairēsis*),<sup>2</sup> *i.e.* analytical and comparative judgments.

In its highest expression, *noēsis* is the soul’s experience of oneness beyond the limitations of the body, while *logismos* deals with plurality in its attempt to

imitate *noēsis* while constrained by its bodily association. The more a person frees himself from the synthesizing and dividing that is an imitation of *noēsis*, and turns instead to a contemplation of self, the more he will experience the true operation of *nous*. Through the process of *noēsis*, “the *psychē* (*i.e.* mind) can come to likeness with *nous*”.<sup>3</sup>

While the *psychē* thinks of things outside itself, the *nous* ‘thinks itself’, so to speak, and that faculty is *noēsis*:

For in seeing the real Being, it looks upon itself: in effect, its vision is its existence; for *nous* and *noēsis* are one.

*Plotinus, Enneads 5:3.6; cf. PA5 pp.88–89*

In fact, at the level of the One, *noēsis* no longer exists, because even in such an all-sufficient experience as *noēsis*, there is some degree of duality. In *noēsis*, opposites still exist (the contemplator and the contemplated), though they may appear to be one. Therefore, the soul has to go beyond the stage of *noēsis* in order to achieve the highest degree of oneness.

The essence and object of *noēsis* is return (*nostos*, as in ‘nostalgia’) to the One, where even *noēsis* is finally discarded. To make the point, Damascius, the last head of Plato’s Academy in Athens, invents a word (*neoesis*) based on a wordplay:

As for *noēsis*, because it includes or reverts to Being and to ‘what is’, it could justly be called ‘a state of return (*neoesis*)’.

*Damascius, First Principles, DSD1 p.181; cf. in RNNT pp.227–28*

See also: **anamnēsis** (8.5), **logismos** (8.5), **meditation** (8.5), **theōria** (8.5).

1. Plotinus, *Enneads* 3:8.6.
2. Plotinus, *Enneads* 5:3.2.
3. Plotinus, *Enneads* 5:3.8.

**nothingness** The realization of the soul in respect to the being of God, that He is everything, the individual is nothing. The term is used with both negative and positive connotations. It is negative in the sense that all created things are essentially nonexistent before the Divine; this brings an individual to a realization of his personal insignificance. It is positive in the sense that when the soul in contemplation of the Divine loses all sense of self, the consciousness becomes immersed in the undivided no-thing-ness of the One; by becoming nothing, it then becomes everything. From the negative, a soul finds its way to the positive.

Philosophically, the notion of nothingness is inherently paradoxical, for by maintaining that something is nothing, it is automatically given the status of a

something. Conceptually, there would seem to be no way around the paradox. Consequently, the notion of nothingness will always remain mysterious.

An awareness and acknowledgement of the soul's nothingness and insignificance before God stems from self-knowledge and a consciousness of its own imperfection. The soul thus learns the necessity of relinquishing its sense of self. This, says Philo Judaeus, a first-century Alexandrian Jewish philosopher, is a natural part of the path to God:

He who thoroughly understands himself, having completely appreciated the nothingness of all created being, abandons himself. And he who has abandoned himself learns to know Him that is.

*Philo Judaeus, On Dreams 1:10; cf. PCW5 pp.326–29, WPJ2 p.305*

Christian mystics who wrote more than a millennium later have said the same. As Thomas à Kempis says:

If I humble myself and acknowledge my nothingness, and think myself to be the dust and ashes that I really am, then Your grace will come to me, and Your light will enter my heart.

*Thomas à Kempis, Imitation of Christ 3:8; cf. IC pp.116–17, ICTK pp.103–4*

Experientially, as the soul focuses in deep contemplation – in the absence of sensory input and with the stilling of the normal and familiar human mental faculties – it is faced with the seeming nothingness of its own being. This apparent nothingness is the gateway to the Divine. Speaking of this to his reader, and encouraging him to attain this state, the author of the *Cloud of Unknowing* writes:

You say: “Where then shall I be? By your reckoning, nowhere!” Precisely. In fact, you have expressed it rather well, for nowhere is where I want you to be! Why? Because nowhere physically is everywhere spiritually. Understand this clearly: your spirit is not tied to anything physical. But when your mind consciously focuses on something, that is where you are spiritually, just as certainly as your body is in that place where you are bodily. And although your bodily mind will now have nothing to feed on, for it thinks that you are doing nothing, go on doing this nothing, and do it for the love of God. Never give up, but steadfastly persevere in this nothingness, with a conscious longing and desire to have God, whom no man can know. For I tell you truly that I would much rather be lost in this nowhere, wrestling with this blind nothingness, than to be like some great lord travelling everywhere, and enjoying the world as if he owned it.

Let go of this ‘everywhere’ and this ‘everything’ in exchange for this ‘nowhere’ and this ‘nothing’. Have no concern that your mind cannot fathom this nothing, for that is the way it should be. For this

nothingness is something so lofty that your thinking faculties cannot comprehend it. This nothing can be experienced more easily than seen, for it is completely dark and hidden to those who have only just begun to look at it. Yet, to tell the truth, it is overwhelming spiritual light that blinds the soul that experiences it, rather than actual darkness or the absence of physical light. Who is it then who is calling it ‘nothing’? It is our outer self, to be sure, not our inner being. Our inner being appreciates it as a fullness beyond measure; for in it we gain an intuitive understanding of everything physical and spiritual alike, without giving special consideration to anything in particular. . . . How wonderfully is a man’s outlook transformed by the spiritual experience of this nothingness and this nowhere.

*Cloud of Unknowing* 68–69; cf. *CU* pp.123–25,  
*CUCW* pp.142–43, *CUEU* pp.249–52

Focused in this nothingness and inner darkness, he says, a person is sometimes faced with the depths of his own sin; at other times he seems to find God Himself in it. But try as it may, the mind cannot comprehend this inner nothingness. Even so, however it may be interpreted, this inner nothingness is automatically encountered upon the path to God:

Sometimes he believes it to be paradise or heaven, because of the varied and wonderful sweetness, comforts, joys and blessed virtues that he finds there. Sometimes he believes it to be God, such is the peace and rest he finds therein. Yes, let him think what he will; he will always find it to be a cloud of unknowing that is between himself and God. . . .

So work hard and with all speed in this nothing and this nowhere, and put aside your bodily mind and its ways of knowing and going about things, for I tell you truly that this sort of work cannot be understood by such means.

*Cloud of Unknowing* 69–70; cf. *CU* pp.125–26, *CUCW* p.144, *CUEU* pp.253–54

Other mystics have also spoken of the soul’s sense of nothingness before the Divine. Jan van Ruysbroek describes the soul as being “consumed and burnt to nothingness in the unity of love”.<sup>1</sup> Meister Eckhart describes God as a “superessential nothingness”:

If I say God is a being, that is not true: He is a transcendent being, and a superessential nothingness.

*Meister Eckhart, Sermons* 96, *STE2* p.332

Others have spoken of the soul’s absorption in this “divine nothingness”:

The pure, detached spirit penetrates beyond all mediation and casts himself into that pure, immediate, divine nothingness, and he knows nothing of creatures and their actions.

*Book of the Poor in Spirit 4:5.1, BPSG p.248*

Many mystics, therefore, have grappled with the notion of nothingness, and because speaking of nothingness immediately makes it a something, the matter has always remained a mystery. Only the soul who has become everything by becoming nothing understands what it means to lose one's self in the divine nothingness.

See also: **nonexistence** (►1).

1. Jan van Ruysbroek, *Sparkling Stone* 8, *SSJR* p.198.

**Nūn wa-al-Qalam** (A/P) *Lit.* Nūn by the Pen (*al-Qalam*); *nūn* is a letter of the Arabic alphabet which stands at the head of *sūrah* 68 of the *Qur'ān*, which then continues, "By the Pen and that which they (men) write therewith, . . .",<sup>1</sup> and so on. The two words are probably unrelated except by contiguity, but it is their proximity in the *Qur'ān* that has given rise to the expression. The actual import being something of a mystery, Sufis and scholars alike have speculated freely as to its possible meanings. The shape of the letter *nūn*, for instance, being somewhat like an inkwell, when taken in association with the Pen, has suggested the image of the "Pen and inkwell".

In the *Qur'ān*, *al-Qalam* is the means by which *Allāh* teaches man of his ignorance.<sup>2</sup> Some Sufis have therefore maintained that *al-Qalam* is the divine *al-'Aql al-Awwal* (Primal Intelligence), the creative power of God by which he 'writes' all things. *Nūn* has likewise been interpreted to refer to *al-'ilm al-ḥaqīqī* (divine knowledge), mystic knowledge of the higher realities.

Rūmī uses the expression to illustrate the need for annihilation of the self through contact with this divine creative Intelligence, to become nonexistent (*nīst*) before union with God is possible. In the terms of the metaphor, the seeker must become a blank piece of paper on which God may write with His 'pen and ink', with His "*Nūn wa-al-Qalam*":

The absolute Being is a worker in Nonexistence (*Nīstī*):

What but Nonexistence (*Nīst*) is the workshop  
of the Maker of existence (*ḥast*)?

Does anybody write something on what is already written on,  
or plant a sapling in a place already planted?

No; he seeks a sheet of paper that has not been written on,  
and sows the seed in a place that has not been sown.

Be you, O brother, a place unsown:  
 Be white paper untouched by writing,  
 that you may be ennobled by *Nūn wa-al-Qalam*,  
 and that the Gracious One may sow seed within you.

*Rūmī, Maṣnavī V: 1960–64, MJR6 pp.117–18*

In one of his poems, Rūmī extends the metaphor in a similar direction. When you are humble and bent over like the shape of the letter *Nūn*, and lying flat in submission like a pen on a desk, then God may write with you whatever He pleases:

When you are in genuflection like a *nūn*,  
 and in prostration like a pen (*qalam*),  
 then you will be joined, like *Nūn wa-al-Qalam*,  
 with “And what they write ...”.

*Rūmī, Dīvān-i Shams-i Tabrīz 1948:20568, KSD4 p.198; cf. in TSR p.165*

See also: **al-Qalam** (6.3).

1. *Qur’ān* 68:1, *MGK*.
2. *Qur’ān* 96:4–6.

**‘olam ha-tikkun** (He) *Lit.* the restored (*ha-tikkun*) realm (*‘olam*); according to the teachings of Rabbi Isaac Luria (C16th), the state or condition of existence after the redemption (known as the ‘coming of the messiah’), when the sparks of light, which were separated from their divine Source during the creative process and are ubiquitous in all created things, will return to their origin in the divine Light, and all the other elements that have fallen or become separated from their union with God will become reunited with Him. Presently, the cosmic order has been shattered and the world is in disarray. With the coming of *‘olam ha-tikkun*, order will be re-established.

See also: **mizvot** (►4), **shevirat ha-kelim** (5.2), **tikkun**.

**omoi no te banashi** (J) *Lit.* opening (*banashi*) the hand (*te*) of (*no*) thought (*omoi*); an expression coined by the Japanese *Zen* master Kōshō Uchiyama (1912–1998) to describe the act of letting go or releasing one’s grip on thoughts and their consequent feelings and emotions, thereby freeing the mind from binding thoughts; also, the title of a book by Kōshō Uchiyama that explains how to live *zazen* (sitting meditation) as a mental attitude in one’s daily life as well as in meditation.

Kōshō Uchiyama explains in his book what he means by the expression:



Dwelling here and now in this reality, letting go of all accidental things that arise in our minds, is what I mean by ‘opening the hand of thought (*omoi no te banashi*)’.

*Kōshō Uchiyama, Opening the Hand of Thought, OHTU p.12*

In order to convey his meaning, he compares this state to sleep in which, although consciousness has been relinquished, the body continues to function normally. The thinking mind, he says, is like a closed fist, holding onto thoughts:

Take for example sleep. No matter who they are, everyone sleeps, having opened what I call the hand of thought. When we sleep, everything does not cease to exist. Letting go of consciousness, our body continues to function; we breathe so many times a minute and our heart beats at a certain pace. The next morning we wake up and open our eyes; our thoughts start up again and begin to function. . . .

I use the expression ‘opening the hand of thought (*omoi no te banashi*)’ to explain as graphically as possible the connection between human beings and the process of thinking. I am using ‘thinking’ in a broad sense, including emotions, preferences, and all sense perceptions, as well as conceptual thoughts. Thinking means to be grasping or holding on to something with our brain’s conceptual ‘fist’. But if we open this fist, if we don’t conceive the thought, what is in our mental hand falls away. . . . Sleeping at night is a natural expression of your life with the hand of your thinking mind wide open.

*Kōshō Uchiyama, Opening the Hand of Thought, OHTU p.28*

In *zazen*, the intention is to cease holding on to thoughts, to let the thoughts go when they arise, to “open the hand of thought”. For example, if the thought of a flower arises, it will also pass away so long as the mind does not start to analyse the flower by grasping the thought and thinking of the qualities of the flower:

What is letting go of thoughts? Well, when we think, we think of *something*. Thinking of something means grasping that something with thought. However, during *zazen* we open the hand of thought that is trying to grasp something, and simply refrain from grasping. This is letting go of thoughts.

When a thought of something does actually arise, as long as the thought does not grasp that something, nothing will be formed. For example, even if thought A (“a flower”) occurs, as long as it is not followed by thought B (“is beautiful”), no meaning such as AB (“a flower is beautiful”) is formed. Neither is it something that could be taken in the sense of A *which is* B (“beautiful flower”). So, even if thought A does *occur*, as long as the thought does not *continue*, A occurs prior

to the formation of a meaningful sequence. It is not measurable in terms of meaning, and it will disappear as consciousness flows on.

Since in *zazen* blood recedes from the head and excitability is lessened, *zazen* is by nature a posture in which we see the futility of chasing after thoughts. As long as we entrust everything to the *zazen* posture, opening the hand of thought (*omoi no te banashi*) will come naturally and spontaneously.

*Kōshō Uchiyama, Opening the Hand of Thought, OHTU p.50*

To further explain his meaning, Kōshō Uchiyama refers to a dialogue between the Chinese master Yàoshān Wéiyǎn (c.745–827) and one of his disciples. One day, when Yàoshān was sitting in meditation, a monk asked him: “What do you think when you sit?” The master said, “I think of not thinking.” The monk queried further, “How do you think of not thinking?” Yàoshān replied, “(By sitting) beyond thinking”. He continued:

When we are sitting, we do not follow our thoughts, nor do we stop them. We just let them come and go freely. We cannot call it thinking, because the thoughts are not grasped. If we simply follow our thinking, it is exactly that, and not *zazen*. We cannot call it not thinking, either, because thoughts are coming and going, like clouds floating in the sky. When we are sitting, our brains don’t stop working, just as our stomachs don’t stop digesting. Sometimes our minds are busy; sometimes they are calm. Just sitting without being concerned with the condition of our minds is the most important point of *zazen*.

*Yàoshān Wéiyǎn, As retold in OHTU p.180 (n.23)*

In another passage, Kōshō Uchiyama explains that the endless cycle of analytical and emotionally charged thoughts is like a labyrinth or dense thicket of bamboo from which the only way of escape is meditation:

We create various illusions in our minds and then jump in, becoming immersed in them. There used to be a dense growth of bamboo at a place in Japan called Yawata, in Chiba prefecture. Once you lost your way in it, you could never find your way out, so there’s an expression, “*Yawata no yabushirazu* (being totally lost in the bamboo thicket of Yawata)”. We human beings make up illusions and then become lost and confused in the jungle we ourselves have created.

How can we awaken from these illusions? The only way is to open the hand of thought, because our thoughts themselves are the source of illusion. When we let go of our thoughts and become vividly aware, all the illusions that create desire, anger, and group stupidity vanish immediately. This is the way of awareness. We must neither fall asleep

nor get carried away by our thoughts. The essential point in *zazen* is to be vividly aware, opening the hand of thought (*omoi no te banashi*).

*Kōshō Uchiyama, Opening the Hand of Thought, OHTU pp.141–44*

Kōshō Uchiyama uses a well-known *kōan* (a *Zen* riddle with no logical answer) to illustrate that by letting go of thoughts, the mind understands the meaning:

There is a *kōan* that asks, “What is your original face before your parents were born?” One might naturally assume that there is some special thing called ‘original face’. But that is not the right approach. When we open the hand of thought, letting go, the original self is already there. It’s not some special mystical state. Don’t seek it somewhere else. When we open the hand of thought, what is there, in that moment, is our original face. When we refrain from grasping our thoughts, we realize that the force that animates our lives and the force that moves the wind are the very same force. Our lives and the force that moves the wind are the same. Our breath and the wind blowing are gone.

*Kōshō Uchiyama, Opening the Hand of Thought, OHTU p.154*

He also considers another *kōan* that is intended to illustrate the meaning or essential nature of the *buddhadharma* (the Buddha’s teachings and realization thereof):

The famous *kōan* of the Chinese master Shítóu Xīqiān (700–790) ‘no gaining, no knowing’ is one of the best expressions of the meaning of *buddhadharma*. This *kōan* is in the *Shōbōgenzō sanbyaku soku* (‘Treasury of the True *Dharma* Eye: Three Hundred Cases’) compiled by Dōgen Zenji.... He (Shítóu) was asked by one of his disciples, Tiānhuáng Dàowù:

“What is the essential meaning of *buddhadharma*?”

Shítóu replied, “No gaining, no knowing.”

Dàowù asked again. “Can you say anything further?”

Shítóu answered, “The expansive sky does not obstruct the floating white clouds.”

The wide expanse of the sky does not obstruct the passing clouds. It lets them float freely. I think these words from the *kōan* fully express the meaning of *buddhadharma*.

At first Shítóu answered “No gaining, no knowing” to the question “What is the essential meaning of *buddhadharma*?” From looking at the Chinese it might appear that he said “I don’t know.” But that’s not what he meant. He meant “No gaining, no knowing is *buddhadharma*.” “No gaining, no knowing” is the attitude of refraining from all fabrication. In other words, it means to be free

from the ideas we make up in our head. I call this opening the hand of thought (*omoi no te banashi*).

When we think of something, we grasp it with our minds. If we open the hand of thought, it drops away. This is Dōgen Zenji's famous phrase *shinjin datsuraku* (dropping off body and mind, getting free of mind and body).<sup>1</sup> Hearing the words dropping off body and mind, many people imagine something like their body becoming unhinged and falling apart. This is not what it means. When we open the hand of thought, the things made up inside our heads fall away; that's the meaning of dropping off body and mind.

The expression 'opening the hand of thought (*omoi no te banashi*)' is on a par with the ancient masters' finest phrases. For example, Zen master Bankei coined the expression 'unborn *buddha*-mind (*fushō no busshin*)'. . . . Bankei said that all problems are resolved with unborn *buddha*-mind. In the same way, all problems are resolved by opening the hand of thought (*omoi no te banashi*). When we try to put everything in order using only our brains, we never succeed. Since all our troubles are caused by our discriminating minds, we should open the hand of thought. This is body and mind dropping off. That is when all our troubles disappear. There is a short poem that says:

When the quarrel over water  
reaches its highest pitch –  
A sudden rain.

People are fighting with each other, each family trying to draw more water into its own paddy field during a dry summer. At the height of the conflict, it suddenly gets cloudy, starts thundering, and big drops of rain begin to fall. The rain resolves the fundamental cause of the fight.

In the same way, if we think something is a big problem – for example, which of two things we should choose – we struggle to resolve it in our heads. But if we open the hand of thought, the problem itself dissolves. When we are sitting, we open the hand of thought and let all our thoughts come and go freely.

“What is the essential meaning of *buddhadharma*.”  
“No gaining, no knowing.”

This *kōan* describes what *zazen* is quite well. What on earth is *buddhadharma*? Fundamentally, it is just opening the hand of thought (*omoi no te banashi*). And to practise opening the hand of thought (*omoi no te banashi*) concretely with the body and mind is *zazen*.

*Kōshō Uchiyama, Opening the Hand of Thought, OHTU pp.140–42*

In all that he is writing and teaching, Kōshō Uchiyama is not claiming to be enlightened, nor does he claim to be a “true teacher”. He is only doing what his master asked him to do. The “true teacher”, he says, is “opening the hand of thought (*omoi no te banashi*)”:

*Zazen*, which is letting go and opening the hand of thought (*omoi no te banashi*), is the only true teacher. This is an important point. I have never said to my disciples that I am a true teacher. From the beginning I have said that the *zazen* each of us practises is the only true teacher.

Since Sawaki Rōshi passed away, I have been giving *dharma* lectures (*teishō*) to my disciples. But this is just my role. I’ve never said that I am a true teacher or that I am always right. Whether you think I am a true teacher or not is only your opinion. A true teacher is just not that sort of thing. Please do not forget that the *zazen* of opening the hand of thought (*omoi no te banashi*) is what constitutes our true teacher and is most worthy of respect.

*Kōshō Uchiyama, Opening the Hand of Thought, OHTU pp.150–51*

Opening the hand of thought is an alternative term for the state of no-mind (*mushin*), which refers to a state in which thoughts are free from attachment to their objects, in which cognition of physical things takes place without attachment, and in which thinking takes place wherein there is no sense of an individual self – *i.e.* there is effectively no thinker and no actor, and actions leave behind no mental impressions. The mind functions in a completely natural, unselfconscious state.

No-mind (*mushin*) is therefore a free mind, a mind that flows freely and does not generate any particular thought. It is not the absence of thinking, it is rather the absence of the intervention of another mind – that of the thinker. It is concentration on the matter in hand and forgetfulness of self. Like a highly polished mirror, no-mind (*mushin*) reflects everything but is affected by nothing, its pristine nature never changing, free from the fetters of attachment and duality that come through ego biases, pre-conceived ideas, analysis, and interpretations. It is a state of spontaneity and naturalness, a state of action in non-action, where actions take place freely and effortlessly in response to circumstances. This is the same state that Kōshō Uchiyama calls ‘opening the hand of thought’.

See also: **wúxīn**.

1. Eihei Dōgen, *Shōbōgenzō*, *Zammai-ō Zammai*, T82 2582:243c.

**osher** (He) *Lit.* joy, bliss. See **bliss** (in Judaism).

**out-of-the-body experience** An experience of floating outside one's body, which may include the perception of one's physical body from an exterior location, such as the ceiling of the room; also called astral or etheric projection; commonly abbreviated to OBE or OOB; an experience common to all races and nationalities, which may happen spontaneously or be triggered by a number of different factors such as mental or physical trauma (*e.g.* an accident, surgical anaesthesia, mental breakdown, and so forth), the use of psychedelic and other neuro-active drugs, magnetic and electrical stimulation of the brain, sensory deprivation or overload, practices designed to enter the sleep state without losing consciousness, visualization, and specific meditative techniques. For some, the experience is self-induced; for others, it is spontaneous. OBEs are best understood as an expansion of consciousness or awareness into a more universal state. The subject does not in fact leave the body, but is experiencing some aspect of the world from a broader perspective, which gives the impression of separateness from the body. In some instances, OBEs are associated with a near-death experience (NDE).

While there is no particular consensus distinguishing an OBE from an NDE, OBEs may be broadly categorized as those in which the subject perceives material reality viewed from outside the physical body. It may be perceived in a seemingly normal manner or from a more subtle viewpoint in which the subject's body or limbs can pass through objects, which may cause panic. An NDE, on the other hand, is an experience of an other-worldly reality, which may be loosely categorized as an 'inner' experience, and which is often recognized as akin to an after-death state.

OBEs have been the focus of considerable research, and a large number of books have been written on the subject. As a result of various research data, it is estimated that roughly twenty percent of people have had at least one experience of an OBE,<sup>1</sup> which can occur to anyone in almost any circumstances:

It now seems that the OBE is at least as common as many other garden-variety psychic experiences, such as telepathic 'hunches', precognitive dreams and other forms of extrasensory phenomena that so many of us experience now and then. But just how common OBEs seem to occur came to light only when a handful of researchers began polling the general public about the experience.

*D. Scott Rogo, Leaving the Body, LBAP p.5*

Some feel that they are being drawn up out of the body, the experience often preceded by a sense of numbness or paralysis as the consciousness is withdrawn from the body and focused within. In other instances, there is a sudden awareness of being outside the body, viewing it from an exterior vantage point, such as the ceiling of an operating theatre:

Some people experience their out-of-body self as an apparitional double of the physical body and may even see a threadlike cord connecting the two organisms. Others merely experience themselves as a speck or ball of light, or simply float about totally disembodied.

*D. Scott Rogo, Leaving the Body, LBAP p.3*

Sylvan Muldoon also wrote on this subject of dual consciousness.<sup>2</sup>

One of the most famous reported cases of an OBE is that recorded by physician and professor of anatomy Sir (later Lord) Auckland Geddes in 1937. Geddes wrote his record in the third person, as he had originally reported that this had happened to a 'friend'. D Scott Rogo paraphrases Geddes:

One night he (Geddes) awoke deathly sick. He was so weak that he could not get to the phone; he could only lay back and wait for death to overtake him. Suddenly, he felt his consciousness dividing itself into two parts: one part remained with his physical body; the other seemed to be above his body as a blue cloud. He was aware of himself in bed, yet at the same time, he could look down on himself from his out-of-body position. Finally, he felt all his vitality pass from the body on the bed into the blue cloud. He – or the cloud – then detached itself from the body and moved about the house. While travelling in this state, Geddes saw his wife enter his room, discover him, and call the local doctor. He watched in disdain as the doctor arrived and gave him an injection to revitalize him. As his heart began to beat again, he found himself being sucked back into his body. He described himself (later) as “intensely annoyed” by having to return!

*D. Scott Rogo, Leaving the Body, LBAP pp.58–59*

OBEs sometimes end out of fear and a sense of getting 'too far away' from the body. In other instances, return to the body is sudden and spontaneous, described as 'popping', 'snapping', or being 'pulled' or 'sucked' back into the body. Though the experience may be described as a kind of dream, many people have reported that they felt more awake during the experience than in their normal waking state.

D. Scott Rogo, a researcher who has himself experienced OBEs, maintains that evaluation and study of the large number of cases of OBE leads to a deeper understanding of the mind and of man's spiritual nature:

As with so many others who have left the body, I share the view that the OBE is a literal 'rehearsal' for death, an experience that actively demonstrates the principle of personal immortality. It is not by mere linguistic fantasy that the OBE voyages of the shamans are called 'flights of the soul'. They show us that some part of the mind and

personality can function independently of the body – and might well survive it. The out-of-body state seems so much more vivid, primal and real than existence in the physical world that many people who have left look back upon their bodies with total indifference. And not even the most sceptical psychologist or parapsychologists would deny that a person who has had an OBE adopts a new attitude toward death itself.... There is now scientific evidence that having spontaneous OBEs dramatically reduces death anxiety.

*D. Scott Rogo, Leaving the Body, LBAP p.170*

As part of the wide range of human states of consciousness, OBEs demonstrate that the body and the material world are not the sole reality. Although some scientists have suggested explanations based on hallucinatory, neurological or psychological activity, those who experience OBEs almost invariably accept them as valid, even if they had previously been ‘unbelievers’.

See also: **astral projection, lucid dreaming, near-death experience** (8.3).

1. See D. Scott Rogo, *Leaving the Body, LBAP* p.5.
2. See Sylvan Muldoon and Hereward Carrington, *Projection of the Astral Body, PABM*.

**pañcha-jñāna** (S), **ye shes lnga** (T), **wǔzhì** (C), **gochi** (J) *Lit.* five (*pañcha, lnga, wǔ, go*) wisdoms (*jñāna, ye shes, zhì, chí*); five pure non-conceptualizing awarenesses that are facets of perfect enlightenment (*bodhi*); a concept developed by the *Yogāchāra* school of *Mahāyāna* Buddhism, each awareness being a transformation of one or more of the nine kinds of consciousness (*viññāna*) according to *Yogāchāra* metaphysics; further developed by tantric Buddhism, which ascribed the five forms of wisdom or awareness to the five transcendent or celestial *buddhas*, also known as five wisdom *buddhas*, *tathāgatas*, *jinās* (conquerors), or *dhyāni buddhas*.

According to *Yogāchāra*, further elaborated by tantric Buddhism, the five awarenesses or wisdoms are:

1. *Tathatā-jñāna, Dharmadhātu-jñāna* (awareness of suchness, awareness of the Reality factor). The unfettered, naked awareness of the emptiness (*shūnyatā*) that is the ground of all being or existence; the wisdom that sees into the foundation of all things; the wisdom that unerringly perceives Reality, and which underlies the four other aspects of wisdom. In the tantric scheme of things, it is the *Dharma* of Vairochana (‘From the Sun’, ‘Illuminator’), who nullifies the spiritual ignorance and forgetfulness in which most human beings are enveloped.



2. *Ādarsha-jñāna, mahādarsha-jñāna* (mirror awareness, great mirror awareness). The perfect mirror (*ādarsha*) awareness in which all things are reflected without distortion or prejudice, calmly and uncritically, revealing their true nature, without the dualism of perceiver and perceived; awareness that is one with the subject of awareness, like a mirror is one with its reflections, yet remains neutral to the experience. Such awareness leads automatically to a perception of one's individual insignificance in the total scheme of things, and the consequent destruction of anger and aversions or dislikes. In tantric understanding it is the wisdom of Akshobhya ('Immovable', 'Immutable').
3. *Pratyavekshaṇā-jñāna* (discriminative wisdom). The penetrating, perceptive discrimination (*pratyavekshaṇā*) that sees unerringly into the individual nature of all beings and all things, seeing both their universal and distinctive attributes, yet knows all beings to be an expression of the One, resulting automatically in the destruction of selfishness and its progeny of desire, lust, and greed. Associated in tantric thought with the wisdom of the celestial *buddha* Amitābha ('Infinite Light').
4. *Samatā-jñāna* (awareness of equality, impartial awareness). The universal wisdom that sees the universal sameness (*samatā*) and equality running throughout all beings and all things, seeing everything with divine impartiality, alike in nature, rising above all differences, recognizing the same universal Essence in all, without interjection of the ego. In tantric thought, it is the wisdom epitomized by the celestial *buddha* Ratnasambhava ('Jewel-Born').
5. *Kṛtīyānushthāna-jñāna* (awareness of accomplishing what has to be done). Duty-fulfilment (*kṛtīya-anushthāna*) wisdom; the wisdom of how to accomplish things successfully; the awareness that recognizes something and formulates a desire to make use of it; the awareness that automatically and spontaneously accomplishes what needs to be done, given the circumstances, always bearing in mind the welfare of other sentient beings; the wisdom that confers perseverance, infallible judgment and the capacity to bring all endeavours to a successful conclusion; the wisdom of an enlightened being, who knows how to train sentient beings to develop the power to be liberated from rebirth and its consequent suffering. In tantric Buddhism, the wisdom associated with Amoghasiddhi ('He Who Unerringly Achieves His Goal', 'All-Accomplishing').

In the tantric tradition, each of the five celestial *buddhas* is regarded as the head of a *buddha* family (*buddha-kula*). The head of all five is Vairocana, who is often placed at the centre of *maṇḍalas*. It is believed that the energy associated with each of these forms of wisdom or awareness can be manifest

in either an enlightened or unenlightened form. In a pure being, they are expressed as positive spiritual qualities, while in an impure being they take on a negative character. A devotee's bond with a particular *dhyāni buddha* is intended to transmute negative qualities into positive:

<b>Buddha-kula</b>	<b>Dhyāni Buddha</b>	<b>Jñāna</b>	<b>Virtue</b>	<b>Imperfection</b>
<i>Tathāgata</i>	Vairochana	Awareness of Reality	Wisdom	Delusion ( <i>moha</i> )
<i>Vajra</i>	Akshobhya	Mirror-like awareness	Humility	Anger, hatred ( <i>dvesha</i> )
<i>Padma</i>	Amitābha	Discriminative wisdom	Perspicuity	Passion, desire ( <i>rāga</i> )
<i>Ratna</i>	Ratnasambhava	Awareness of equality	Selflessness	Pride ( <i>māna</i> )
<i>Karma</i>	Amoghasiddhi	Wisdom of accomplishment	Fearlessness	Jealousy ( <i>īrshā</i> )

The descriptions of different texts and schools vary to some extent. The Tibetan *Geluk* school, for instance, exchanges the wisdom associated with the *Tathāgata* and *Vajra* families. In other texts, Ratnasambhava represents earth and Akshobhya water, while Vairochana is in the centre, representing space, with Akshobhya in the east. The many *maṇḍalas* also depict other variations in the assignment of the various attributes and relationships, *etc.*

In terms of general human psychology, any intention to overcome negative qualities is likely to bear fruit – however it may be expressed or formulated and to whatever celestial being, real or imagined, it may be directed. It is the individual's intention, reinforced by the universal presence of the essential spirit or consciousness within all beings, that brings about the positive results. Every sentient being has as its essence the *buddha*-nature, and the capacity for enlightenment. It is only because of negative traits and the influence of past *karma* and *saṃskāras* that the positive attributes of enlightenment – such as love and compassion, wisdom, supernatural power and so on – do not automatically manifest. Therefore, to meditate upon the qualities of enlightenment as expressed by a particular celestial *buddha* is likely to reinforce the growth of such qualities in the meditator, whether or not the *buddha* in question really exists.

See also: **buddha-kula** (►1), **dhyāni buddha** (►1).

**paññā-vimutti** (Pa) *Lit.* liberation (*vimutti*) through wisdom (*paññā*). See **vimutti**.

**parāvidyā** (S/H) *Lit.* higher (*parā*) knowledge (*vidyā*); knowledge of the beyond, mystic knowledge, transcendental knowledge; divine science, divine wisdom, gnosis; also called *brahmavidyā* and *brahmajñāna* (knowledge of *Brahman*).

The distinction between *aparāvidyā* (inferior knowledge) and *parāvidyā* (higher knowledge) is made in the *Upanishads*. *Aparāvidyā* encompasses

all forms of knowledge pertaining to the world, including all arts, sciences, technology, medicine, grammar, literature and so on, as well as scriptural knowledge and intellectual knowledge of *Brahman* and the spiritual path. *Parāvidyā* entails actual experience of the imperishable *Brahman*. *Aparāvidyā* is regarded as ignorance (*avidyā*) when compared to *parāvidyā*.

The *Muṇḍaka Upanishad* makes a clear distinction between the lower knowledge (*aparāvidyā*) of existence in the world of transient phenomena and the higher experiential knowledge or gnosis of *Brahman*. *Aparāvidyā* cannot remove *avidyā*, which is the cause of *samsāra* ('wandering', transmigration). Only *parāvidyā* can cut the root of *avidyā*, and end the cycle of rebirth and suffering:

As the knowers of *Brahman* have said:  
Two kinds of knowledge are to be known:  
the higher (*parā*) and the lower (*aparā*).  
Of these, the lower is the *Rig Veda*,  
the *Yajur Veda*, the *Sāma Veda*, the *Atharva Veda*,  
phonetics, religious observances, grammar,  
etymology, metrics, astrology, and so on;  
And the higher (*parā*) is that  
by which the Imperishable is realized.

That which cannot be seen or grasped,  
which has neither origin nor attributes,  
neither eyes nor ears, neither hands nor feet,  
which is eternal, omnipresent, all-pervading, and extremely subtle,  
which is imperishable and the source of all beings:  
That the wise regard as the Source of all beings.

*Muṇḍaka Upanishad 1:1.4–6*

In a like manner, speaking of *Brahman* as the supreme *Purusha* (Being), who is "unborn, and is both inside and outside of everything", Swami Nikhilananda paraphrases Shankara's commentary on the *Prashna Upanishad*:

*Samsāra*, unreal in nature, characterized by cause and effect, and subject to modifications, falls within the scope of the lower knowledge, *aparāvidyā*. . . . Transcending cause and effect, devoid of *prāṇa*, unknown to the mind, unperceived by the senses, other than an object, all good, tranquil, free from modifications, imperishable and true, the *Purusha* is attainable by the higher knowledge, the *parāvidyā*.

*Swami Nikhilananda, on Prashna Upanishad 4:1, U2 p.178*

See also: **aparāvidyā**.

**parikamma samādhi** (Pa) *Lit.* preliminary (*pari*) work (*kamma*) concentration (*samādhi*); in Buddhism, preparatory concentration; preparatory or preliminary meditation, concentration, or one-pointedness of mind; the initial and undeveloped concentration that practitioners commonly experience when meditation is first attempted; the first of three degrees of concentration leading up to the attainment of the first *jhāna* (state of meditative absorption); a term introduced in the *Abhidhamma* (systematic analysis of the Pali *suttas*). *Parikamma samādhi* is sometimes identified with *khaṇika samādhi* (transient or changeable *samādhi*), and sometimes regarded as a stage following *khaṇika samādhi*.

*Parikamma samādhi* is succeeded by threshold, neighbourhood or access concentration (*upacāra samādhi*), which leads to attainment or fixed concentration (*appanā samādhi*), by means of which the practitioner enters the first *jhāna*. The three *samādhis* belong to *kāmaloka*, the three realms of sensual desire that lie below the *jhānas*, comprising the hellish regions, this world, and the lower heavenly regions. Attainment of the first *jhāna* heralds entry into *rūpaloka* (world of subtle forms, patterns, or archetypes). There are four *jhānas* or degrees of absorption in *rūpaloka*, followed by a further four of an even greater degree of subtlety in *arūpaloka*. *Rūpaloka* and *arūpaloka* would seem to correspond to the astral and higher realms of Western terminology. In his *Visuddhimagga*, Buddhaghosa (C5th CE) describes at length how *upacāra samādhi*, *appanā samādhi* and the eight *jhānas* may be attained using one or more of forty different meditation objects or themes (*kammaṭṭhāna*).<sup>1</sup>

See also: **kammaṭṭhāna** (8.5), **khaṇika samādhi**, **upacāra samādhi**.

1. Buddhaghosa, *Visuddhimagga* 3–11, PTSV pp.84–372.

**parinibbuta** (Pa), **parinirvṛita** (S) *Lit.* completely (*pari*) peaceful (*nibbuta*); completely at peace, without necessarily having attained *nibbāna*; also, completely quenched, cooled, extinguished or extinct, a usage that implies attainment of *nibbāna* (extinction). The terms *nibbuta* and *parinibbuta* come from different verbal roots to *nibbāna* and *parinibbāna*, but the meanings of the verb forms have merged, such that the adjective *parinibbuta* is used to describe a *buddha* or *arahanta* (noble one, enlightened one) who has passed through *parinibbāna*.<sup>1</sup>

The *Bhāra* ('Burden') *Sutta* of the *Saṃyutta Nikāya* portrays the five *khandhas* (aggregates, collections, aspects of body and mind through which a sentient being functions in this world, and which serve as a basis for the sense of self-identity) as burdensome and the source of suffering. He who "lays down" this "heavy burden" finds the peace of *nibbāna*:

A burden (*bhāra*) indeed are the five aggregates (*khandhas*),  
and the burden bearer is the individual (*puggala*).

Taking up the burden in the world is suffering (*dukkha*),  
 laying down the burden is bliss (*sukha*).  
 He who lays down the heavy burden,  
 without taking up another,  
 having pulled out craving (*taṇhā*) along with its root –  
 He is without longing (*nicchāta*),  
 completely at peace (*parinibbuta*).

*Samyutta Nikāya 22:22, Bhāra Sutta, PTSS3 p.26*

The last line could also be translated “completely extinguished”. *Nibbāna* is probably implied, although some ambiguity remains. The same meaning is found in the *Dhammapada*:

Those whose minds are well grounded  
 in the (seven) factors of enlightenment (*sambojjhanga*),  
 who without clinging to anything rejoice in freedom from attachment,  
 whose appetites have been conquered,  
 who are full of light –  
 They attain *nibbāna* (*parinibbuta*) even in this world.

*Dhammapada 6:14; cf. DPR*

This refrain echoes through other early Buddhist poetry, as in the *Sutta Nipāta*:

He in whom there are no attachments whatsoever,  
 whose sins have been pulled out by the root,  
 who is free from desire, without longing –  
 Such a one wanders rightly in this world.

He whose impurities (*āsava*) have been destroyed,  
 who is free from pride (*māna*),  
 who has overcome all the path of passion (*rāga*),  
 is subdued, perfectly happy (*parinibbuta*), and of a firm mind –  
 Such a one will wander rightly in the world.

*Sutta Nipāta 2:13, Sammāparibbājanīya Sutta, PTSN pp.64–65, SNVF p.61*

See also: **nibbuta**, **parinirvāṇa**.

1. See Bhikkhu Bodhi, *Connected Discourses of the Buddha*, CDBB pp.49–50.

**parinirvāṇa** (S/H), **parinibbāna** (Pa), **yongs su mya ngan las 'das pa** (T), **bān nièpán** (C), **hatsu nehan** (J) *Lit.* beyond (*pari*) *nirvāṇa* (*nièpán*); full *nirvāṇa*, final *nirvāṇa*; total extinction, final blowing out; completely (*yongs*

*su*) transcending (*las 'das*) suffering (*mya ngan*); a Buddhist and Jain term for the state after death of one who has completed the life during which he attained *nirvāṇa*, and for whom there is no need for any future births; the final or perfect *nirvāṇa* from which there is no return; depending on the context, either the after-death state itself or the act of passing away of a *buddha* or *arhat* (noble one, enlightened one) who has experienced *nirvāṇa* during life; also called *anupadhishesha nirvāṇa* (without residue *nirvāṇa*), *nirupadhishesha nirvāṇa* (without limitation *nirvāṇa*), and *pratishṭhita nirvāṇa* (abiding or permanent *nirvāṇa*, in which a *buddha* remains totally separated from the world after his death). Many of the categories of *nirvāṇa* and *parinirvāṇa* are the elaboration and analysis of later Buddhist scholars and originators of doctrine, long after the time of the Buddha. In early Pali texts, *parinibbāna* can sometimes refer to *nibbāna* during the present life.

According to Buddhist belief, a person who attains *nibbāna* during this life, although no longer subject to imperfections (Pa. *āsava*) and impurities (Pa. *kilesa*), and no longer liable to create new *karma*, still remains subject to suffering and the effect of past *karma*. This is known as *kilesa-parinibbāna* (Pa. extinction of impurities). Only after separation from the body at death is full release from suffering believed to be possible.

A *buddha*'s complete detachment from the world after his death is a teaching associated with *Theravāda* Buddhism, deemed inferior by later *Mahāyāna* doctrine, with its *bodhisattva* ideal. Monks of the *Mahāyāna* tradition take a vow not to enter a *nirvāṇa* from which there is no return while any beings remain in *samsāra*. This is the condition of the fully awakened *bodhisattva*. Due to his great wisdom (*prajñā*) and awareness (*jñāna*), he is not bound by *samsāra* ('wandering', transmigration), but because of his great compassion (*karuṇā*), he does not remain engrossed in *nirvāṇa*.

In a saying attributed to the Buddha in the *Dhammapada*, speaking of the fate of individuals after death, he says:

Some are reborn from a womb;  
Evil-doers go to hell;  
The good enjoy blissful states;  
The pure attain *parinibbāna*.

*Dhammapada* 9:11

The nature of the attainment of *nirvāṇa* is a mystery, only understood by personal experience, and the question of whether a *tathāgata* (*buddha*) exists after death, or not, or both or neither was declared by the Buddha to be one of the four unanswerable questions, the 'undeclared issues' or 'unexpounded things (*avyākṛita-vastu*)' that he said could never receive satisfactory intellectual answers.<sup>1</sup>

Several *sūtras* record attempts to persuade the Buddha to provide answers to these questions, but the Buddha makes no reply because – since these things cannot be understood intellectually – any conceptual answer that is given might lead to the false notion that something fundamental has been understood. The Buddha regarded the attempt to answer such questions as speculation – something he did not encourage – and as distractions from the very practical task of meditation and overcoming human imperfections. Of course, this has not prevented intellectuals – ancient and modern – from trying to analyse why the Buddha did not reply to such questions, forgetting that such intellectual analysis and speculation were the very things that he taught should be avoided.

The circumstances surrounding the Buddha's *parinibbāna* are told in the *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta* of the *Dīgha Nikāya*. Much of the text consists of a dialogue between the Buddha and his disciple Ānanda, with much repetition of material that appears elsewhere in other canonical Pali sources. In conversation with *Māra* (Death, the Evil One) and later with Ānanda and the assembled monks, the Buddha says that he will die in three months' time,<sup>2</sup> and shortly before the appointed time, he duly eats the meal that results in his death.<sup>3</sup> He also says he would have prolonged his life until the end of the "age (Pa. *kappa*, S. *kalpa*)" had Ānanda understood the hint the Buddha had given him and had requested the Buddha to do so.<sup>4</sup> The *sutta* ends with the Buddha's death, cremation, and the distribution of his relics.

A retelling of the story, the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*, written in the first century CE but no longer extant in its original Sanskrit, differs significantly from the Pali version. It teaches the doctrine of the *buddha*-nature (*buddhadhātu*) and the potential for all beings to attain *nirvāṇa*. The *buddha*-nature is the true self, the eternal essence that remains when all that is not-self has been taken away. This would seem to be akin to the Hindu *ātman* (soul) when both are understood in an entirely mystical way. The Sanskrit text was translated into Chinese in the fifth century by the Indian monk Dharmakshema, who added much new material, his new version becoming the basis of further translations. This text had a huge impact on the spread of *Mahāyāna* teachings in East Asia. Translations subsequently became available in Tibetan, Japanese, Korean, and so on. The story of the Buddha's *parinirvāṇa* is also retold, often with further embellishments, in other *sūtras*, such as the iconic *Lotus Sūtra*.

The term is not uncommon in Manichaean literature. The third-century Iranian mystic Mānī taught that Jesus, the Buddha and Zarathushtra had all been saviours. Probably dependent upon the background of the particular audience he was addressing, Mānī taught from Christian, Zoroastrian and Buddhist doctrines, demonstrating the mystic truth in all of them. This led to some interesting fusions of terminology and expression among the writings of his disciples and later followers of the Manichaean religion. Mānī's teaching that Buddha had also been a saviour is underlined by the use of Buddhist terminology.

The death of Mānī (“Messenger of Light”), for instance, is generally described as his *parinirvāṇa*:

It was an hour of grief and a day of sorrow when the Messenger of Light entered *parinirvāṇa*. He left behind him the leaders that tend the community, and he bade farewell to the whole great flock.

*Manichaean Text, RMP ce; cf. GSR p.86, ML p.57*

And:

Just as a sovereign who takes off his armour and his garment (worn in battle), and puts on another royal garment, so did the Messenger of Light put aside the warlike garment of his body; and he sat down in the ship of light, and received the divine garment, the diadem of light, and the beautiful garland. And in great joy he ascended, together with the gods of light, accompanying him on the right and left, to the sound of harps and the songs of joy, in divine miraculous power, like swift lightning or a shooting star, to the Column of Glory, the Path of Light. . . . And there he stayed with God *Ohrmazd*, the Father. He left behind the whole flock of the righteous, orphaned and sad, for the master of the house had entered *parinirvāṇa*.

*Manichaean Text, RMP p; cf. ML pp.55–56*

Jesus’ death and return to God is also described in Manichaean texts as his “*parinirvāṇa*”. Indeed, in Manichaean belief, since the ‘resurrection’ of Jesus was seen not as a bodily event but as the final release of his soul from the body, his ‘resurrection’ was commonly described as his *parinirvāṇa*. There is, for example, a Parthian fragment that clearly points to the writer’s belief that Jesus and Mār Zakū, one of Mānī’s successors, had both been saviours:

Reverence to you, son of greatness (Mānī),  
 who has set your righteous ones free;  
 Now also protect the teacher, Mār Zakū,  
 the great shepherd of your bright flock.  
 Wake up, brothers, chosen ones:  
 On this day came the salvation of souls, . . .  
 when Jesus, the Son of God, went into *parinirvāṇa*.

*Manichaean Hymns, MM3 p.881ff., RMP bx–by; cf. GSR p.71, ML p.106*

The Manichaeans themselves also considered that they were being led to “*parinirvāṇa*” by their saviour, Mānī:

The living beings in the five states of existence,  
 you freed from ignorance.



You endowed them with wisdom,  
 leading them toward *parinirvāṇa*.  
 Many different passions,  
 such as hatred and bitterness  
 had disturbed these sentient beings  
 and led their thoughts astray.  
 But when you, our holy Father,  
 descended from heaven,  
 the families of all sentient beings  
 reached peaceful *nirvāṇa*.

*Manichaeon Hymns, TTT3 p.183ff.; cf. MTP (32–35) p.181, GSR p.280*

See also: **nirvāṇa**.

1. *E.g. Majjhima Nikāya 72, Aggīvacchagotta Sutta, PTSM1 pp.485–89; Anguttara Nikāya 10:93, Diṭṭhi Sutta, PTSA5 pp.185–89.*
2. *Dīgha Nikāya 16, Mahāparinibbāna Sutta, PTSD2 pp.106, 114, 118–20.*
3. *Dīgha Nikāya 16, Mahāparinibbāna Sutta, PTSD2 pp.127–36.*
4. *Dīgha Nikāya 16, Mahāparinibbāna Sutta, PTSD2 pp.103, 115–16, 118.*

**pariññā, pariññā (Pa)** *Lit.* full understanding or comprehension; exact, profound or complete knowledge, free of personal mental distortion and delusion; a term widely used in the Buddhist Pali *suttas*, with three forms distinguished and variously analysed in the scholarly texts of the *Abhidhamma*, the *sutta* commentaries, and associated literature.

At various places in the Pali *suttas*, the Buddha speaks of full understanding (*pariññā*) regarding the many aspects of the path he teaches. Foremost among those things concerning which an aspiring disciple should develop full understanding are the five ‘aggregates’ or ‘collections’ (*khandha*). Without full understanding (*pariññā*) of the nature and functioning of these fundamental aspects of existence, says the Buddha, while at the same time abandoning craving (*chandarāga*) for them and becoming dispassionate towards them, “one is incapable of destroying suffering (*dukkha*).” This full understanding (*pariññā*), he adds, requires the destruction of lust (*rāga*), hatred (*dosa*), and delusion (*moha*).<sup>1</sup>

Considered simply, the *khandhas* are aspects of mind and body, clinging or attachment to which gives rise to the illusory sense of I-ness or a personal self. They represent the multiplicity of existence at the materio-mental level of existence. There are some variations among the various Buddhist schools in the way the five *khandhas* are understood, but fundamentally they are: corporeality or form (*rūpa*), which is experienced through the senses; feeling or sensation (*vedanā*), which is the corresponding mental sensation arising from the interaction between the five senses and the mind; perception or

cognition (*saññā*), which includes most aspects of everyday thinking, as well as mental function in higher spheres of consciousness; mental fabrications or formations (*sankhāra*), which can be good or bad, and include such things as habits, conditioned attitudes, likes, dislikes, and other mental impressions that make up who an individual thinks he is and generally colour his perceptions; and lastly, personal consciousness (*viññāṇa*), which in this context is understood to arise from the activities of the other *khandhas*. It is this collection of mental and bodily ‘things’ that give rise to the illusory sense of an individual self that is subject to transmigration.

Breaking the five *khandhas* down into their components, other *suttas* speak of full understanding regarding the eye and forms, the ear and sounds and so on, and all the diverse phenomena that arise from them. Since the senses play a major part in the way that suffering arises, the Buddha maintains that their full understanding is essential for the overcoming of suffering. In many places, he repeats, “It is for the full understanding (*pariññā*) of suffering that the holy life is lived under the Blessed One.”<sup>2</sup> And the means of acquiring full understanding (*pariññā*) of all aspects of existence, he again repeats, is by following the noble eightfold path.<sup>3</sup> Delusion and misunderstanding lead to craving, clinging and the resultant suffering, while the Buddha’s intention is to help sentient beings achieve full understanding, which leads to the cessation of suffering.

In the *Mūlapariyāya* (‘Root of All Things’) *Sutta* of the *Majjhima Nikāya*,<sup>4</sup> the Buddha describes how worldly minded people (*puthujjanas*), sincere disciples (*sekhas*), enlightened ones (*arahantas*), and *tathāgatas* (*buddhas*) view the world. They all address the same things, but each has a different perspective. The perceptions of a worldly minded person, through false identification with a personal self or ego, are filtered through an array of personal biases, prejudices, imperfections and impurities, resulting in a distorted understanding, and a mistaken perception regarding the root causes of phenomena. Under the influence of delusion (*moha*) and spiritual ignorance (*avijjā*), things are endowed with properties they do not possess. Lust, for example, will make a source of potential suffering seem attractive and alluring; hatred and anger will make something neutral or positive appear negative; while delusion makes the impermanent and unreal appear permanent and substantial. However, the meaning of some aspects of the *sutta* is by no means obvious, and commentaries, ancient and modern, vary in the epistemological detail of their interpretations.

The *Mūlapariyāya Sutta* ranges through twenty-four aspects of existence, and the way in which various categories of people perceive them. The twenty-four aspects begin with the four primary elements (*bhūtas*) of earth, water, fire, and air; continue with sentient beings in general, together with gods of various ilk; cover the four formless realms (*arūpaloka*); take in that which is seen, heard, sensed, and cognized; consider unity, diversity, and multiplicity;

and culminate in *nibbāna*. The twenty-four aspects are further broken down into their perception and an individual's several forms of relationship with that perception. In each instance, the worldly minded person is said to lack full understanding (*pariññā*) of any of them and is always deluded; the sincere disciple is engrossed in the attempt to attain full understanding and to perceive things correctly; the enlightened one, who no longer perceives things through the screen of 'I' and 'mine', effortlessly possesses full understanding; while the *tathāgata* or *buddha* possesses full understanding "to the end".

Considering the various aspects of full understanding that are raised in the different *suttas*, the writers of the scholarly *Abhidhamma*, the *sutta* commentaries and associated literature have identified three forms of full understanding (*pariññā*). Summarized in the *Visuddhimagga* of Buddhaghosa,<sup>5</sup> the three forms are:

1. *Ñāta-pariññā*. Full understanding of the known (*ñāta*); knowledge that consists of discerning the particular characteristics of something; full understanding of the particular characteristics of the materio-mental phenomena that comprise the five aggregates (*khandhas*) of existence; e.g. the somewhat tautological: "feeling has the characteristic of being felt."
2. *Tīraṇa-pariññā*. Full understanding by investigation or judgment (*tīraṇa*); analytical knowledge; the insight-wisdom (*vipassanā-paññā*) arrived at by scrutiny and analysis of the three characteristics (*tilakkhaṇa*) of existence (impermanence, suffering, and not-self), especially in regard to the five aggregates of materio-mental phenomena.
3. *Pahāna-pariññā*. Full understanding by dispelling, abandoning, or overcoming (*pahāna*); the insight-wisdom (*vipassanā-paññā*) arrived at by relinquishing desire and craving for the materio-mental phenomena that comprise the five aggregates; knowledge that arises from a careful consideration of the three characteristics of existence, leading to their being overcome.

1. E.g. *Samyutta Nikāya* 22:23–25, *Khandha Samyutta*, PTSS3 pp.26–27; cf. CDBB pp.872–73.
2. E.g. *Samyutta Nikāya* 35:25–27, 60, 81, 152, *Salāyatana Samyutta*, PTSS4 pp.16–19, 32–33, 51, 138.
3. E.g. *Samyutta Nikāya* 38:13–15, *Jambukhādaka Samyutta*, PTSS4 pp.258–60.
4. *Majjhima Nikāya* 1, *Mūlapariyāya Sutta*, PTSM1 pp.1–6.
5. Buddhaghosa, *Visuddhimagga* 20:3, PTSV p.606; see also *Paṭisambhidāmagga* 87, PTSP1 p.26.

**paroksha** (S) *Lit.* beyond (*para*) the eyes (*aksha*); out of sight, hidden, imperceptible, mysterious; abstruse, recondite, secret; a term used in Indian philosophy for indirectly acquired or second-hand knowledge; often as *paroksha-jñāna* (indirect knowledge).

In *Advaita Vedānta*, *paroksha* refers to intellectual belief in or acceptance of something as opposed to *aparoksha*, which implies direct experience or actual realization of that thing. Accepting the existence of *Brahman*, the supreme Reality of the *Upanishads*, is thus *paroksha*, while actual realization of *Brahman* is *aparoksha*.

In Buddhist philosophy, things are divided into two categories – those that are evident to the senses and those whose existence is hidden, but can be inferred. The latter category includes such things as enlightenment, reincarnation, liberation from birth and death, and so on. A third category, *atyartha-paroksha* (deeply hidden), is sometimes mentioned, which refers to those things that cannot be directly perceived or known by inference, and which are only known to ordinary people by belief in statements given in the scriptures. *Atyartha-paroksha* knowledge includes such things as knowledge of the past lives of others, which can only be fully known and understood by a *buddha*.

In Jainism, according to various Jain teachers and philosophers,<sup>1</sup> *paroksha-jñāna* is knowledge acquired through the mind and senses (*mati-jñāna*) or from what has been heard or learnt (*shruti-jñāna*). *Paroksha-jñāna* is also contrasted with *pratyaksha-jñāna* (direct knowledge), which implies only the natural, inherent knowledge of the soul. Indian philosophy in general regards knowledge acquired from the senses as *pratyaksha*. Early Jain teachers and philosophers, such as Āchārya Umāswāmī (c.C1st–2nd CE),<sup>2</sup> have been the only ones to classify sensory knowledge as indirect (*paroksha*), since knowledge or experience of the physical universe does not constitute direct knowledge or experience of the highest Truth or Reality. Jain philosophy describes five kinds of *paroksha-jñāna*:<sup>3</sup>

1. *Smarāṇa*. *Lit.* the act of remembering; remembrance, recollection; remembering something; for instance, seeing someone and remembering who he is.
2. *Pratyabhijñāna*. *Lit.* recognition; recognition of an object by observation of and knowledge of its characteristics; for instance, the recognition of a creature never previously seen from a memory of images or written descriptions about it.
3. *Tarka*. *Lit.* conjecture, reasoning, enquiry; knowledge of relationships between things; for instance, that smoke and fire are related to each other; also called *ūha* (consideration).
4. *Anumāna*. *Lit.* inference, consideration; drawing a conclusion from information or observation; for instance, the sight of smoke leads to the conclusion that there is a fire.

5. *Āgama*. *Lit.* reading, studying; traditional doctrines or a scriptural collection of such doctrines; knowledge acquired from a trustworthy source.

As with practically all such terms, there are differences of opinion and various categorizations among the different schools concerning the various forms and aspects of knowledge and perception.

See also: **jñāna**, **pramāṇa**, **pratyaksha**.

1. *E.g.* Kundakunda, *Pravachanasāra* 1:58; Āchārya Umāswāmī, *Tattvārtha Sūtra* 1:11–16; *Samansuttam* 38:685–89.
2. Āchārya Umāswāmī, *Tattvārtha Sūtra* 1:12.
3. See S.C. Ghoshal, on *Dravya Saṃgraha* 5, *DSNS* pp.12–13.

**passaddhi** (Pa) *Lit.* tranquillity, serenity, calmness; in Buddhism, a calm and serene state of mind that arises out of deepening concentration in meditation; the fifth of the seven factors of enlightenment (*bojjhanga* or *sambojjhanga*); the fourth of the ten imperfections of insight (*vipassanūpakilesas*).

According to the *Sīla Sutta* of the *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, as concentration deepens, the *sambojjhanga* of *passaddhi* follows on from that of rapture (*pīti*):

For one whose mind is uplifted by rapture (*pīti*), the body and mind become tranquil (*passambhati*). Whenever the body and mind become tranquil in a *bhikkhu* whose mind is uplifted by rapture (*pīti*), then the enlightenment factor of tranquillity (*passaddhi-sambojjhanga*) is aroused....

For one whose body has become tranquil (*passaddha-kāya*) and who is happy (*sukha*), the mind becomes concentrated (*samādhīyati*). Whenever, *bhikkhus*, the mind becomes concentrated in a *bhikkhu* whose body (*kāya*) has become tranquil (*passaddha*) and who is happy, then the enlightenment factor of concentration (*samādhī-sambojjhanga*) is aroused.

*Saṃyutta Nikāya* 46:3, *Sīla Sutta*, *PTSS* pp.68–69

The analytical *Abhidhamma* texts subdivide *passaddhi-sambojjhanga* into two categories – *kāya-passaddhi* (tranquillity of body) and *citta-passaddhi* (tranquillity of mind). In this context, *kāya* pertains not to the physical body *per se*, but to the more mental aspects of the mind-body complex such as feeling and perception. When these are stilled, the body is automatically stilled. *Kāya-passaddhi* thus refers to stilling the bodily and sensory aspects of the mind-body complex, while *citta-passaddhi* refers to stilling the consciousness aspects. Together they imply the subsidence of all restlessness, excitement,

agitation, and disturbance of all aspects of mind and body. The result is a deep physical relaxation and stillness, accompanied by an unperturbed and undistracted mental serenity. In *passaddhi*, with progress through the *bojjhangas*, the disturbed and exciting elements of *pīti* are calmed, leading to the deeper degrees of concentration (*samādhi*) that follow. The practitioner feels spiritually quiet, comfortable, content, and truly happy.

*Passaddhi* is also the fourth of the ten imperfections of insight (*vipassanūpakkilesa*), which in themselves are not negative, but become so if a meditator becomes attached to them and stops progressing towards the goal. The twentieth-century Thai teacher Ajahn Lee Dhammadharo explains that the negative side of *passaddhi* manifests when

the body is at peace and the mind serene, to the point where you don't want to encounter anything in the world. You see the world as being unpeaceful and you don't want to have anything to do with it. Actually, if the mind is really at peace, everything in the world will also be at peace. People who are addicted to a sense of peace won't want to do any physical work or even think about anything, because they're stuck on that sense of peace as a constant preoccupation.

*Ajahn Lee Dhammadharo, Basic Themes, BTAD p.127*

See also: **pīti**, **vipassanūpakkilesa**.

**paṭisambhidā** (Pa), **pratisamvid** (S), **so sor yang dag par rig pa** (T), **wúài jiě** (C), **mugege** (J) *Lit.* analysis, analytic insight; analytical (*so sor yang dag par*) knowledge (*rig pa*), knowledge arrived at by a process of analysis; acumen; discernment or discrimination in the sense of analysis and the perception of differences; from *bhid* (to break, to split, to sever) + *paṭi-sam-* (back together), implying both synthesis as well as analysis;<sup>1</sup> unimpeded (*wúài*) understanding (*jiě*); clear understanding and eloquent expression of all aspects of the Buddha's teaching; in *Mahāyāna* Buddhism, attained by a *bodhisattva* upon reaching the ninth of the ten stages (*dasha-bhūmi*), where it is called the good mind or good wisdom (S. *sādhumatī-bhūmi*) that enables him to teach others clearly and fluently; divided into four categories.

The four kinds of analytical knowledge are mentioned in the Pali Buddhist *suttas*,<sup>2</sup> but not explained. It is only in the later analytical texts that they receive any definition. Nevertheless, the contexts in which they are mentioned in the *suttas* make it clear that they are associated with comprehending and expressing the Buddha's teaching or *Dhamma*. According to the *Anguttara Nikāya*, Sāriputta, one of the Buddha's foremost disciples, relates:

Half a month after my full ordination, I realized the analytical knowledge of meaning (*attha-paṭisambhidā*), ... of the *Dhamma*

(*dhamma-paṭisambhidā*), ... of language (*nirutti-paṭisambhidā*), ... and of discernment (*paṭibhāna-paṭisambhidā*), in respect of its divisions and formulation. In many ways I explain it, teach it, proclaim it, establish it, disclose it, analyse it, and elucidate it. Let anyone who is perplexed or uncertain approach me with a question; I will satisfy him with my answer. Our teacher, who is highly skilled in our teachings, is present.

*Anguttara Nikāya* 4:172, *Sāriputta Paṭisambhidā Sutta*,  
PTSA2 p.160; cf. NDBB pp.538–39

Again, in a *sutta* describing four kinds of *Dhamma* speakers, the Buddha explains that some speak little, others speak much; some speak meaningfully, others pointlessly. Yet audiences reckon them all to be “*Dhamma* speakers”. Some speak a lot, he continues, but say little; some speak little, but have much to say; some have few words and little to say. He concludes, however, that “it is impossible and inconceivable that one who possesses the four analytical knowledges (*paṭisambhidā*) will speak few words with little meaning.”<sup>3</sup> But again, the nature of the four *paṭisambhidās* is not elucidated. In the *Akuppā Sutta* of the *Anguttara Nikāya*, the Buddha says that he who attains the four analytical forms of knowledge, together with an understanding of the “extent to which his mind is liberated”, soon “penetrates the Unshakeable”.<sup>4</sup>

The primary sources that explain the meaning of the four *paṭisambhidās* are: the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*<sup>5</sup> – a text included among the *suttas* of the Pali canon, but whose content is more in keeping with the *Abhidhamma* texts (analytic systematization of the Pali *suttas*); the *Paṭisambhidā-vibhanga* (‘Analysis of Analytic Insight’) of the *Vibhanga*,<sup>6</sup> which is the second book of the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*; and Buddhaghosa’s *Visuddhimagga*.<sup>7</sup> But although the four *paṭisambhidās* are discussed from several points of view, the meaning is often abstruse. Taking a combined view of these explanations, the four *paṭisambhidās* are:

1. *Attha-paṭisambhidā*. Analytic knowledge of the true meaning or sense of something, analytic knowledge concerning results and consequences; according to Buddhaghosa, *attha* (result, meaning) is the consequence of a cause. He mentions five such consequences in particular: *nibbāna*; the fruit of *kamma*; all conditional things; the meaning of spoken words; and the many varieties of consciousness (*i.e. cittas*). The *Vibhanga* adds that analytical knowledge of true meaning is knowledge of suffering, which is knowledge of the result of a cause.

Analytic knowledge of meaning is likened to the process by which the disciples of the Buddha are said to have listened to his discourses and then carefully analysed or considered his meaning. In this way, they cleared their doubts and arrived at an understanding of his teachings. The result of their analysis was understanding of the meaning.



The analytic knowledge of result or consequence refers to a process by which material and mental phenomena (things and thoughts *etc.*) are analysed. This practice leads to the conclusion that everything, inner or outer, arises from some prior cause or condition; that everything is dependent upon something else for its existence and is the on-going cause of further phenomena. Everything is thus understood to be relative, conditioned, and subject to impermanence, which is the first of the three characteristics of existence, according to Buddhist philosophy. This leads, in turn, to the insight that since nothing lasts and everything is constantly changing, no true peace or happiness can be derived from transient existence, which itself is actually a source of suffering (*dukkha*), and is the second characteristic of existence. Further consideration leads to the realization that nothing has a definitive and independent self (*anattā*), which is the third characteristic of existence.

2. *Dhamma-paṭisambhidā*. Analytic knowledge of basic principles and the relationships between things; analytic knowledge of the causes or origins that lead to the conclusions arising from the analytic knowledge of consequences (*attha-paṭisambhidā*); also, analytic knowledge with regard to the *Dhamma*. *Dhamma* is a term with a wide spread of meaning, ranging from ‘thing’, ‘phenomenon’, ‘cause’, ‘teaching’ *etc.*, through to the supreme teaching and path of the Buddha. In this sense, cause or origin also refers to the *Dhamma*. Buddhaghosa concludes that any knowledge arising from reflection upon any aspect of the *Dhamma* is *dhamma-paṭisambhidā*.

The *Vibhanga* says that knowledge of the origin and cause of suffering is *dhamma-paṭisambhidā*; knowledge of suffering itself is *attha-paṭisambhidā*. Knowledge of the cessation of suffering is *dhamma-paṭisambhidā*; knowledge of the way leading to the cessation of suffering is *attha-paṭisambhidā*. Likewise, knowledge of the *Dhamma* is *dhamma-paṭisambhidā*; understanding of the *Dhamma* is *attha-paṭisambhidā*. Put the other way around, knowledge of things that are born, produced or otherwise come into being is *attha-paṭisambhidā*; knowledge of the causes by which those things are manifest is *dhamma-paṭisambhidā*.

Although *attha-paṭisambhidā* is listed before *dhamma-paṭisambhidā*, the latter actually precedes the former. Intellectual knowledge of the *Dhamma*, including the *suttas* and other texts, precedes understanding of its meaning and is *dhamma-paṭisambhidā*. Understanding the *Dhamma* and the meaning of the texts is the consequence of that study. In short, the first two kinds of *paṭisambhidā* can be summarized as understanding how and why things happen in the way they do and why life is the way it is.

3. *Nirutti-paṭisambhidā*. Analytic knowledge of language; philology; understanding the nuances of language; the ability to understand all languages, including those of the gods, celestial beings, and animals; knowledge of the language used to express the *Dhamma* and its meaning, *i.e.* the first two forms



of *paṭisambhidā*; the ability to read, listen to and study discourses and other teaching material in order to comprehend the words, the phrases and their nuances in an unambiguous manner, and be able to express their meaning clearly and succinctly.

4. *Paṭibhāna-paṭisambhidā*. Analytic knowledge of the first three kinds of knowledge; analytic knowledge arising from the review or consideration of the other three kinds of analytical knowledge; analytic knowledge of discernment, *i.e.* intellectual analysis of and insight into the full understanding of the first three kinds of analytical knowledge; more simply, eloquence, quick wit in dialogue, original thinking, facility in providing explanations, and the ability to inspire others with words; and knowing the best way to express something.

The four analytic knowledges encompass all aspects of the Buddha's teachings, and are held in great esteem. Whoever achieves them is a true representative of the Buddha because when the need arises he can explain the teachings as eloquently, analytically and convincingly as did the Buddha during his lifetime. The Buddha often had to enter into discussions with learned philosophers and other erudite scholars from other religions and belief systems. According to the many dialogues among the Pali *suttas*, he was always able to point out the deficiencies in their points of view, and persuade them of the soundness and validity of his own. He commanded all aspects of such situations because he had mastered the four analytical knowledges.

See also: **bhūmi**.

1. K. Nizamis, *Notes on Anguttara Nikāya* 5:95, *Akuppā Sutta*, PTSA3 pp.119–20, ANKN (n.3).
2. *Anguttara Nikāya* 4:172 (*Sāriputta Paṭisambhidā Sutta*), 5:86 (*Paṭisambhidā Sutta*), 5:95 (*Akuppā Sutta*), 7:38–39 (*Paṭisambhidā Sutta*), PTSA2 p.160, PTSA3 pp.113, 119–20, PTSA3 pp.119–20, PTSA4 pp.32–33.
3. *Anguttara Nikāya* 4:139 (*Dhammakathika Sutta*), 4:140 (*Vādī Sutta*), PTSA2 pp.138–39; cf. NDBB pp.518–19.
4. *Anguttara Nikāya* 5:95 (*Akuppā Sutta*), PTSA3 pp.119–20, NDBB p.723.
5. *Paṭisambhidāmagga* 25:416ff., PTSP2 p.88ff.
6. *Vibhanga* 15, VCRD pp.293–305.
7. *Visuddhimagga* 14:21–31, PTSV pp.440–43.

**peace, peace of God, eternal peace** The inherent peace of the soul; the peace of the soul in heaven, in eternity, with God, *etc.*; a frequently used term in Jewish, Christian, and allied literature. Christian writers commonly quote a passage attributed to Jesus in John's gospel:

Peace (*eirēnē*) I leave with you, my peace (*eirēnē*) I give unto you:  
 but not as the world gives, do I give to you.  
 So let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

*John 14:27; cf. KJV*

Likewise, the blessings of Paul are often quoted: “Let the peace (*eirēnē*) of God rule in your hearts,”<sup>1</sup> and “The peace (*eirēnē*) of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”<sup>2</sup> This kind of peace is of an inner, spiritual nature:

If the soul is enabled to reach the peace of God, which surpasses all that is of sense, then all that is of sense will remain bereft and mute, unable to expound it.

*John of the Cross, Spiritual Cantic 29:9; cf. CWJC2 p.144*

Such peace arises, writes the author of the *Cloud of Unknowing*, as the best fruits of contemplation:

He who would have God continually within him, and live in love, experiencing the supreme peace of God – the greatest and best part of contemplation possible in this life – must see to it night and day that he puts down, whenever they come, the spirit of the flesh and the spirit of the world and, above all, the spirit of malice, anger, and wickedness.

*Anon., Discernment of Spirits 8; cf. SWT p.45*

Walter Hilton adds that the peace of God is experienced by those who listen to the Voice of God, as mentioned in John’s gospel:

Our Lord says of those that love Him: “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they know Me.”<sup>3</sup> The secret Voice of God is true, and it makes the soul true. In it there is no deception or illusion, no pride or hypocrisy, but gentleness, humility, peace, love and charity, and it is full of life and grace. So when this Voice sounds within a soul, it is sometimes so powerful that the soul immediately lays aside whatever it is doing – whether prayer, speaking, reading, meditation, or any physical occupation – and listens to it alone. And as it listens to the sweet sound of God’s Voice, it is filled with peace and love, transported far beyond all thought of earthly things. In this peace, God reveals Himself to the soul, sometimes as Lord to be feared, sometimes as a Father to be revered, and sometimes as a Spouse to be loved.

At such times, the soul is absorbed in a wonderful reverence and loving contemplation of God, which brings it a delight far transcending anything it has ever known. It enjoys so great a sense of security and peace in God, and so acute a realization of His goodness, that it

wishes always to remain in this state, and never to do anything else. The soul feels that it is touching God Himself, and by virtue of His ineffable touch, it is made whole and stable, reverently contemplating God alone, as though nothing existed save God and itself. At these times it is upheld solely by His favour and wonderful goodness, and is profoundly conscious of this truth. This feeling often comes without any special study of holy scripture, and with only a few words in mind.

Walter Hilton, *Ladder of Perfection* 2:44, LPH p.246

See also: **rest**.

1. *Colossians* 3:15, *KJV*.
2. *Philippians* 4:7; cf. *KJV*.
3. *John* 10:27, *KJV*.

**perfection** The highest degree of some quality; the state of attainment of that quality; mystically, the essential nature of both God and the soul, which is a part of Him. Strictly speaking, it cannot be said that perfection is a quality of the Divine, for qualities are relative to their opposites, to other qualities, or to other degrees of the same quality, while the Divine is pure oneness without any taint of otherness, duality, or imperfection. God *is* perfection; it is not one of His attributes. He cannot be compared with anything. Since the essence of the soul is God, mystics say that the soul can attain this degree of perfection when it unites with the oneness of God, and loses all sense of individuality. See **perfection** (►4).

**píng, pínghéng** (C) *Lit.* level, equal (*píng*) scales (*héng*); hence, balance, equilibrium; related in meaning to *zhōng* (centre, mean). See **zhōng**.

**pīti** (Pa), **prīti** (S), **dga' ba** (T), **xǐ** (C), **ki** (J) *Lit.* pleasure, joy, bliss, rapture, ecstasy; zest, exuberance, enthusiasm, rapturous delight; a delightful or pleasurable state of mind arising out of concentration in meditation; in Buddhism, the fourth of the seven *bojjhangas* or *sambojjhangas* (enlightenment factors) that lead to *nibbāna*; the third of the five *jhānangas* (*jhāna* factors); the third of the ten *vipassanūpakkilesas* (imperfections of insight); one of the fifty-two mental factors (*cetasika*).

The beings who dwell in *ābhassara*, one of the heavens of *brahmaloka* associated with second *jhāna* (meditative absorption), are said to subsist on joy (*pīti*), their bodies radiating light in all directions: “There they dwell, made out of mind (energies), feeding on rapture (*pīti*), self-luminous, moving through the air, abiding in glory; and they continue thus for a long, long period of time.”<sup>1</sup>

*Pīti*, as the fourth *bojjhanga*, is a welcome stage. According to the *Gilāna Sutta* of the *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, the Buddha says:

The enlightenment factor of rapture (*pīti-sambojjhanga*) is well expounded by me. When developed and cultivated, it leads to direct knowledge (*abhiññā*), to enlightenment (*sambodha*), and to *nibbāna*.

*Saṃyutta Nikāya 46:14, Gilāna Sutta, PTS5 p.81; CDBB p.1582*

*Pīti* is also said to be one of the ways to balance out sloth and torpor when a practitioner finds meditation bland and insipid, and is becoming mentally sluggish.<sup>2</sup> An influx of joy spurs the meditator on to continue and not to relinquish his effort. *Pīti* is also said to arise as a result of the third *bojjhanga* (*vīrya*, effort); subsequently, the excitement inherent in *pīti* subsides, giving way to the fifth *bojjhanga* of *passaddhi* (tranquillity):

When his energy (*vīrya*) is aroused, there arises in him spiritual rapture (*pīti*). Whenever a spiritual rapture (*pīti*) arises in a *bhikkhu* whose energy is aroused, then the enlightenment factor of rapture (*pīti-sambojjhanga*) is aroused. . . .

For one whose mind is uplifted by rapture (*pīti*), the body and mind become tranquil (*passambhati*). Whenever the body and mind become tranquil in a *bhikkhu* whose mind is uplifted by rapture (*pīti*), then the enlightenment factor of tranquillity (*passaddhi-sambojjhanga*) is aroused.

*Saṃyutta Nikāya 46:3, Sila Sutta, PTS5 p.68*

It is sometimes said in the *suttas* that *pīti* arises from *pāmojja* (gladness), a lesser form of spiritual joy that arises from conquest of the five hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*): sensory desire (*kāmacchanda*), ill will (*vyāpāda*), sloth and torpor (*thīna-middha*), restlessness and anxiety (*uddhacca-kukkucca*), and wavering doubt or lack of conviction (*vicikicchā*). *Pīti* is regarded as the antidote to *vyāpāda*. The *Sāmaññaphala Sutta* of the *Dīgha Nikāya* traces the steady deepening of concentration and interior bliss and joy as the meditator approaches and enters the first *jhāna*, the *jhānas* being states of meditative absorption associated with *rūpaloka* (world of forms, patterns, or archetypes):

When he knows that these five hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*) have left him, gladness (*pāmojja*) arises in him; from gladness comes rapture (*pīti*); from the rapture (*pīti*) in his mind his body is made tranquil; with a tranquil (*passambhati*) body he feels bliss (*sukha*); and with bliss (*sukha*) his mind is concentrated (*samādhīyati*). Being thus detached from sense desires, from unwholesome states, he enters and remains in the first *jhāna*, which is filled with initial thought (*vitakka*) and sustained thought (*vicāra*), born of detachment (*viveka*), and filled

with rapture (*pīti*) and bliss (*sukha*). And with this rapture (*pīti*) and bliss (*sukha*) born of detachment, he so suffuses, drenches, fills and pervades his body that there is no spot in his entire body that is untouched by this rapture (*pīti*) and bliss (*sukha*) born of detachment.

*Dīgha Nikāya 2, Sāmaññaphala Sutta, PTS D1 p.73; cf. TBLD p.102*

As the third of the five *jhānangas* (*jhāna* factors), *pīti* is understood in a more specific manner. The five *jhānangas* are states of mind that are worked through as the meditator passes through the four *jhānas*. *Pīti* grows stronger as concentration (*samādhi*) of mind develops on the approach to the *jhānas* and with the inner seclusion and deeper concentration experienced in the first two *jhānas*. It is replaced by *sukha* (bliss) on entry to the third *jhāna*, and finally by the *ekaggatā* (one-pointedness) of the fourth *jhāna*.

The distinction between *pīti* and *sukha* in the Pali *suttas* is not always easy to discern. According to Buddhaghosa in his *Visuddhimagga*, “Where there is *pīti* there is *sukha*; but where there is *sukha* there is not necessarily *pīti*.” He goes on to explain that *pīti* is delight in attaining the object, while *sukha* is enjoyment of the object acquired. *Pīti* is the delight of a tired and thirsty traveller who is told that shade and water lie just ahead. *Sukha* is his enjoyment of that shade and water. *Pīti* contains an element of excitement and agitation, whereas *sukha* is peaceful and serene. These texts also identify five categories of *pīti*.<sup>3</sup>

1. *Khuddikā* or *khuddakā pīti* (minor rapture). A thrill of joy that makes one’s hair stand on end, one’s flesh to creep, or makes one tearful.
2. *Khaṇika pīti* (momentary rapture). A flash of joy, like a flash of lightning.
3. *Okkantikā pīti* (surging rapture). A flood of joy, like waves breaking on the seashore.
4. *Ubbegā pīti* (uplifting rapture). A transcendent joy that can cause levitation, floating above the ground like a piece of cotton carried by the wind. The meditator may lose control and start acting or speaking spontaneously without any forethought and without being aware of what he is saying or doing.
5. *Pharaṇā pīti* (pervading rapture). An all-pervasive joy that fills the entire body, like a cave inundated by a flood. Sometimes the body may feel as if it is very small or very large.

Bhikkhu Khantipalo explains:

*Pīti* or ‘rapture’ is another word which defies translation. Its nature is most easily understood from its physical manifestations, though in *jhāna* these are very refined. In ordinary mental states it is quite

common to experience something of rapture, especially the first kind – ‘minor rapture’, defined as able to raise the hairs on the body. ‘Momentary rapture’ is compared to lightning flashes in different parts of the body and lasting only a brief time. But with ‘overflowing rapture’ there is a repeated swell or flow so that the body feels as though waves were breaking again and again. The fourth variety, ‘uplifting rapture’, can actually cause the body to lift off the ground. The body of one who experiences this rapture feels like a feather and has lost the earthy weightiness usually associated with the physical body. It can indeed float or fly, but this is merely a by-product of meditation development and should not sidetrack efforts to attain *jhāna*. The last aspect of rapture is called ‘pervading’, as when a great mountain cave is suddenly filled with a huge flood of water. This is the aspect of rapture found in the first *jhāna*. Though rapture has been illustrated by what it does to the body, yet it is a mental factor and ... its gradual strengthening means that interest becomes stronger and the direction of the mind has greater impetus towards one-pointedness.

*Bhikkhu Khantipalo, Calm and Insight, CIMK p.53*

Despite the ecstasy and delight that it brings, *pīti* is also regarded as one of the *vipassanūpakkilesas* (imperfections of insight). It is a result of meditation, not the goal, and if a meditator becomes attached to repetition of the experience, then it becomes a distraction and hindrance to further progress. Bhikkhu Khantipalo equates it to experience of the *kuṇḍalinī* encouraged in some forms of *yoga*:

Rapture or *pīti* ... increases among meditators. ... Rapture is certainly wholesome, but clinging to it or indulging in it is not. Powerful rapture arises at the base of the spine and can travel upwards, ... and advice upon how this should be channelled is best got from a teacher. In Hinduism, this powerful rapture goes under the name of *kuṇḍalinī* and leads to the progressive purification of various centres in the body. This should not be played with! People who do so, having no deep spiritual aim and no good advice from a teacher often suffer very much from their rash attempts to do things with this rapture. *Kuṇḍalinī yoga* should only be practised if one has competent advice. Even then, it is far better to practise the Buddha’s way of steady and natural development through mindfulness rather than forcing the pace. Rapture, if it arises during meditation or at other times, should just be regarded with mindfulness, then attachment to it will not be strengthened. And it should not be made the subject of meditation, as it is itself a meditation result and not a cause for more development.

*Bhikkhu Khantipalo, Calm and Insight, CIMK p.102*

In the *Dhammapada*, *pīti* is understood in a more general sense. The Buddha says:

He who imbibes the *Dhamma*  
dwells in joy (*pīti*) with mind at peace (*sukha*);  
The wise man (*pañña*) ever delights in the *Dhamma*  
revealed by the *ariyas* (noble ones, enlightened).

*Dhammapada* 6:4; cf. *DPN*

Having tasted the sweetness of solitude  
and the sweetness of tranquillity (*upasama*),  
he becomes free from fear and impurity,  
imbibing the sweetness of joy (*pīti*) in the *Dhamma*.

*Dhammapada* 15:9; cf. *DPN*, *DPR*

Let us live with happiness (*sukha*),  
we who possess nothing;  
Like the radiant gods, let us feed on joy (*pīti*).

*Dhammapada* 15:4; cf. *DPN*

See also: **passaddhi**, **pīti**, **sukha**.

1. *Dīgha Nikāya* 1, *Brahmajāla Sutta*, *PTSDI* pp.17–18; cf. *TBLD* pp.75–76.
2. E.g. *Saṃyutta Nikāya* 46:53, *Aggi Sutta*, *PTSS5* p.113.
3. E.g. Buddhaghosa, *Visuddhimagga* 4:94–100, 20:115, *PTSV* pp.143–45, 635.

**prajñā** (S/H), **pragyā** (H), **pañña** (Pa) *Lit.* higher (*pra*) knowledge (*jñā*); wisdom, discernment, understanding, knowledge, insight, discrimination, intelligence; intuitive wisdom, transcendent wisdom, mystical wisdom, supernal wisdom, higher mystic knowledge, transcendent consciousness, gnosis; the higher wisdom or understanding that is experienced in *samādhi* (transcendent absorption), and which is an inherent aspect of higher consciousness; direct awareness and perception of the truth beyond the illusion of the world; the ability to see directly into the true nature of things beyond the processes of the intellect; innate intelligence or inherent knowledge, contrasted with *saṃjñā* (knowledge by observation) and the mundane understanding of things or conceptual knowledge; knowledge of the true nature of the soul and the mystic Reality.

*Prajñā* is to be distinguished from *prājñā* (relating to wisdom, wisdom-like), a term used in the *Māṇḍūkya Upanishad*<sup>1</sup> for the state of consciousness of a person in deep sleep, unaware of anything, unable to discriminate one thing from another. Deep sleep is like *prajñā* in the sense that it is devoid of the perceptions of duality.

### *In the Hindu Tradition*

According to the *Aitareya Upanishad*, the divine intelligence, wisdom or consciousness (*prajñā*) underlies all forms of existence and is its ultimate Reality:

He is *Brahmā*; He is *Indra*; He is *Prajāpati* – He is all these gods. And He is the five great elements of earth, air, ether, water, fire; He is all things made of them and all the seeds of creation of one kind or another: the egg-born, the womb-born, the sweat-born, the sprout-born, horses, cows, people, elephants – and whatever else there is that breathes or moves or flies or is stationary. All these are guided by intelligence (*prajñā*), are established in intelligence (*prajñā*). The universe has intelligence (*prajñā*) for its guide. Intelligence (*prajñā*) is the basis and support of everything. Verily, *Brahman* is intelligence (*prajñāna*).

*Aitareya Upanishad 3:1.3*

In his *Yoga Sūtras*, Patañjali distinguishes between “learnt or derived knowledge” and the “wisdom (*prajñā*)” revealed in deep meditation (*samādhi*, absorption):

There (in *samādhi*), wisdom (*prajñā*) is identical with Truth (*Ṛita*).  
Learnt or derived knowledge is different from wisdom (*prajñā*),  
which is the Thing itself.

*Patañjali, Yoga Sūtras 1:48–49*

He says that this kind of wisdom comes from success in concentration (*dhāraṇā*), contemplation (*dhyāna*) and *samādhi* (absorption), a state he calls *saṃyama* (self-mastery and deep meditation):

As a result of such mastery,  
the light of higher consciousness (*prajñā*) arises.  
Its purpose is to discover higher and higher stages (of consciousness).

*Patañjali, Yoga Sūtras 3:5–6*

The *Bhagavad Gītā* similarly talks of self-mastery as the path to wisdom, when Arjuna asks Kṛishṇa:

What are the signs of a man of steady wisdom (*sthita-prajñā*),  
and *samādhi* (deep meditation)?  
A man of steady wisdom (*sthita-dhī*) – how does he speak?  
How does he sit? How does he walk?

*Bhagavad Gītā 2:54*

And Kṛishṇa replies:



O Pārtha, when a man abandons  
all the desires of the mind;  
When he is only satisfied by his spirit's  
dwelling in the supreme Spirit:  
Then is he called a man of steady wisdom (*sthita-prajñā*).

He whose mind is not agitated in adversity,  
who is free from desire amid pleasure,  
who is devoid of passion (*rāga*), fear (*bhaya*), and anger (*krodha*):  
Such a person is called a sage (*muni*) of steady wisdom (*sthita-dhī*).

He whose mind is without self-centred affection for anything,  
who rejoices not in pleasant situations,  
nor recoils from those of an unpleasant nature:  
His wisdom (*prajñā*) is firmly established (*pratishṭhita*).

He who can withdraw his senses from their objects,  
like a tortoise can withdraw its limbs on all sides:  
His wisdom (*prajñā*) is firmly established (*pratishṭhita*).

Though they (the senses) fall away from the embodied soul  
who turns away from them, yet the taste for them remains:  
But when the supreme Truth is realized, even the taste departs.

O son of Kuntī, the wayward senses  
forcefully draw the mind even of one  
who is striving earnestly on the path.  
Having controlled them all,  
he should become steadfastly devoted to me.  
The wisdom (*prajñā*) of one whose senses are under control  
is firmly established (*pratishṭhita*).

*Bhagavad Gītā 2:55–61*

### ***In Jainism***

Since spiritual wisdom is potentially available to every human being regardless of religion or culture, *paññā* is also an aspect of Jain philosophy. Āchārya Kundakunda (traditionally dated to C2nd–3rd CE) writes that it is wisdom that frees the soul from bondage to the body and to this world:

The captive soul (*jīva*) and its fetters are distinguished by their different and essential natures; when the two are severed by the instrument of wisdom (*paññā*), then they are disentangled.

When the captive soul (*jīva*) and its fetters are thus separated, each having its own particular and essential nature, then, completely casting aside all its fetters, the pure soul (*attā*) can be realized.

How is the pure soul (*attā*) realized? The pure soul (*attā*) is realized by wisdom (*paññā*). Just as they are separated by wisdom (*paññā*), so also by the same wisdom (*paññā*), can the soul be realized.

That conscious being, apprehended by wisdom (*paññā*), is the real ‘I (*aham*)’. Whatever mental activity remains should be understood as other than ‘I’.

*Kundakunda, Samayasāra 9:316–19; cf. SSKK pp.169–70*

### ***In Buddhism***

Buddhism defines various categories of *prajñā*. In the Pali *Theravāda* tradition, *paññā* covers right view (*sammā-diṭṭhi*) and right resolve (*sammā-sankappa*), which are the first two aspects of the noble eightfold path (*ariyāṭṭhangikamagga*). It is the wisdom that transcends ordinary understanding and truly comprehends the impermanence (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*) and lack of a permanent identity (*anatta*) of all phenomena, material and mental.

According to the Pali *suttas*,<sup>2</sup> knowledge is of three kinds. The most advanced of these is *bhāvanāmaya-paññā*, acquired – says Buddhaghosa – when meditation has reached the stage of fixed concentration (*appanā samādhi*), which coincides with entry into the first *jhāna* (state of meditative absorption). All beings possess the capacity for gnosis of mystical *prajñā*, but it needs to be developed through meditation:

Wisdom based on thinking (*cintāmaya-paññā*) is that which is acquired through one’s own thinking, without having learnt it from others. Wisdom based on learning (*sutamayā-paññā*) is that which is heard from others, and has thus been acquired through learning. Wisdom based on meditation (*bhāvanāmaya paññā*) is that which is acquired through meditation in one form or another, and which has reached the stage of fixity (*appanā*).

*Buddhaghosa, Visuddhimagga 14:14, PTSV p.439*

*Prajñā* is said to include *bodhi* (wisdom), *karuṇā* (compassion), and *jñāna* (knowledge). It is one of the five powers (*bala*) or faculties (*indriya*) of mind – as the understanding that substantiates faith and counteracts doubt. It is one aspect of the ‘threefold way’ or three kinds of training or learning (*sikkhā*), along with good conduct (*sīla*) and concentration (*samādhi*). It is one of the perfections (*pāramī*), and is also categorized as one of the four foundations (*adhiṭṭhāna*) of the mind of an *arahanta* (noble one, enlightened one), the other three being truthfulness (*sacca*), generosity (*cāga*), and peace (*upasama*).<sup>3</sup>

In the *Abhidhamma*, *paññā* (as *paññindriya*) is generally listed as the last of the fifty-two mental functions (*cetasika*). It is regarded as the underlying or essential knowledge that informs the other *cetasikas*. *Paññindriya* brings understanding of the true nature of things, *i.e.* that they are pervaded by impermanence (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*), and lack of a permanent identity (*anatta*).

*Prajñā* and *paññā* appear in many compound terms, which attempt to elucidate the range of meaning inherent in the term. In addition to those already mentioned, these include:

*Adhipaññā* (Pa. higher wisdom, gnosis). The form of wisdom derived from a study and practice of the noble eightfold path. As in *adhipaññādharmavipassanā* (Pa. insight concerning things based upon higher wisdom or gnosis), one of the eighteen principal *vipassanās*. See **anupassanā** (8.5), **vipassanā** (8.5).

*Paññā-vimutti* (Pa. liberation through wisdom or gnosis). See **vimutti**.

*Paññā-cakkhu* (Pa. eye of wisdom; S. *prajñā-chakshus*). The eye of omniscience that sees everything that can be known; one of the five kinds of vision possessed by a *buddha*, the others being: *maṃsa-cakkhu* (physical eye); *dibba-cakkhu* (divine eye), that sees everything in this and other worlds; *buddha-cakkhu*, which sees into the heart of human beings; and *samanta-cakkhu* (all-around eye), the vision of a *buddha*, whose wisdom and vision are perfect, encompassing all things. See **pañcha-chakshus** (8.2).

*Prajñā-pāramitā* (S. perfection of wisdom). In *Mahāyāna*, *prajñā* is the sixth of the *pāramitās* (perfections), the virtues and characteristics to be cultivated by a *bodhisattva*, generally listed as six or ten in number. As the outcome of an aspirant having mastered the previous five perfections (generosity, good conduct, forbearance, diligence, and contemplation), it is the wisdom of enlightenment, the essence of buddhahood, and the wisdom of the *tathāgatas* ('thus come ones', *buddhas*) and *bodhisattvas* (those on the path to enlightenment). *Prajñā-pāramitā* implies understanding of *shūnyatā* (emptiness), which is the true nature of all things, and the wisdom that leads to enlightenment. *Prajñā-pāramitā* is also a name appearing in the title of numerous *sūtras* that deal with the direct realization of ultimate Truth.

In the *Dhammapada*, the Buddha speaks of wisdom (*paññā*) in a simple manner. The development of wisdom, he says, requires meditation:

There is no meditation (*jhāna*)  
 for one who is without wisdom (*apaññā*),  
 no wisdom (*paññā*) for one without meditation (*jhāna*);  
 He in whom there is meditation (*jhāna*) and wisdom (*paññā*),  
 he indeed is close to *nibbāna*.

*Dhammapada 25:13, DPR*

For he who is wise (*pañña*) and meditative,  
 the life of a single day is better  
 than he who lives for a hundred years  
 without wisdom (*paññā*) and self-control.

*Dhammapada 8:12*

A wandering mind, he says, does not contain perfect understanding:

He whose mind is wavering,  
 who does not know the true Way (*Dhamma*),  
 whose peace of mind is shaken:  
 His wisdom (*paññā*) is imperfect.

*Dhammapada 3:6*

Wisdom should be used to cut the roots of desire or craving (*taṇhā*):

Streams (of craving) flow everywhere:  
 the creeper (of craving) keeps on springing up.  
 If you see a creeper springing up,  
 cut its root by means of wisdom (*paññā*).

*Dhammapada 24:7*

The Buddha also has some advice on how not to acquire wisdom:

He who rises not when it is time get up,  
 who, though young and strong, is lazy,  
 who is weak in resolution –  
 He does not find the path of wisdom (*paññā*).

*Dhammapada 20:8*

And:

A man who has learnt little grows old like an ox:  
 he gets fatter, but his wisdom (*paññā*) grows not!

*Dhammapada 11:7*

*Prajñā* is a constant theme throughout Buddhist teachings, and is variously understood to refer to all wisdom that lies between a truly spiritual, though human, understanding and the highest inner and mystical wisdom or gnosis. In its highest expression, it is a gnosis beyond the limits of this world and of normal human understanding. Huìnéng (638–713), the sixth patriarch of Chinese *Chán* Buddhism, says:

*Prajñā* ... is inherent in every one of us. It is because of the delusions under which our minds labour that we fail to realize its presence, and that we have to seek the advice and guidance of the more highly enlightened before we can realize it in our mind's essence. You should know that as far as *buddha*-nature is concerned, there is no difference between an enlightened man and an ignorant one. What makes the difference is that one realizes it, while the other is ignorant of it.

*Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch 2, On Prajñā; cf. BBDG p.235*

He also equates *prajñā* with the heightened consciousness of *samādhi* (absorption, concentration), where things are known by the infusion of the deep understanding that is an innate aspect of a heightened consciousness:

*Samādhi* and *prajñā* are fundamental. But you must not be under the wrong impression that they are independent of each other. They are not two entities, but are inseparably united. *Samādhi* is the quintessence of *prajñā*, while *prajñā* is the activity of *samādhi*. At the very moment that one attains *prajñā*, *samādhi* is present; when one enters *samādhi*, *prajñā* is present. If you understand this, you understand the oneness of *samādhi* and *prajñā*. A disciple should not think that there is a distinction between 'samādhi gives rise to *prajñā*,' and '*prajñā* gives rise to *samādhi*.' To hold such an opinion would imply that these are two separate characteristics in the *Dharma*.

*Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch 3, On Dhyāna and Samādhi; cf. BBDG p.249*

Huìnéng also says that such spiritual wisdom depends upon the content of a person's mind:

What is *prajñā*? *Prajñā* is *zhìhuì* (wisdom). When your thoughts are never negative, when you always live *zhìhuì*, this is called the life of *prajñā*. When a single thought of yours is negative, then *prajñā* ceases to function. When a single thought of yours is of *zhì* (enlightened), then *prajñā* is born. Being always negative in their minds, people yet declare themselves to be living *prajñā*. *Prajñā* has no shape, no form, it is none other than the essence (*xìng*) of wisdom (*zhìhuì*).

Huìnéng, *Tánjīng* 26; cf. in MZBS p.83

### ***Prājñā***

*Prājñā* (as opposed to *prajñā*) is used in the *Māṇḍūkya Upanishad* in a technical sense for the consciousness that experiences deep and dreamless sleep.<sup>4</sup> *Prājñā* means ‘relating to *prajñā*’ or ‘like *prajñā*’. It is like *prajñā* because in both dreamless sleep (*prājñā*) and the higher mystic wisdom (*prajñā*), there is an absence of desire, as well as a complete unawareness of the sufferings and duality of material life. *Prājñā* is described as an ‘undifferentiated mass of consciousness’. By this is meant that both dreaming and waking consciousness are differentiated or divided by the objects of imagination, thought, and perception; they are states of duality or multiplicity. But in deep sleep there is no such differentiation. It is also said that the consciousness experiences bliss while in deep sleep, but retains no memory of it upon awakening. As the *Vedāntasāra* observes, “A man awakening from deep sleep may say, ‘I slept blissfully; I did not know anything.’”<sup>5</sup>

*Prājñā* (as dreamless sleep) is also said to be a reflection of the state of consciousness in the causal realm. Similarly, *taijasa* (‘consisting of light’, i.e. consciousness in the dream state) is a reflection of the subtle or astral realm, where everything is created out of the minds of the inhabitants. The two are a part of a triad, with consciousness at the gross material level being known as *vishva* (universal) or *vaishvānara* (common to all men).

Some Vedantic commentators have identified deep sleep with the higher wisdom or gnosis, but this appears to make little sense. Gauḍapāda, one of the earliest commentators, clearly distinguishes *prājñā* (as the consciousness in dreamless sleep) from the transcendent consciousness of *turīya* (fourth, beyond waking, dreaming, and deep sleep). Both are states where the perception of duality is absent; but one is an unconscious state while the other is superconsciousness:

Dreamless sleep (*prājñā*) knows nothing either of the self or of the non-self, nor of Truth, nor untruth; but *turīya* is ever existent and ever all-seeing.

Unawareness of duality is common to both *prājñā* and *turīya*. But *prājñā* is associated with sleep as its cause, and sleep does not exist in *turīya*. . . . *Prājñā* is the state of dreamless sleep. Those who have known the Truth see neither sleep nor dream in *turīya*. Dreaming is the incorrect perception and sleep the non-perception of Reality. When the erroneous knowledge in these two is destroyed, *turīya* is realized.

*Gauḍapāda, Kārikā 1:12–14, on Māṇḍūkya Upanishad; cf. U2 pp.239–41*

See also: **avasthā**.

1. E.g. *Māṇḍūkya Upanishad* 3–5, 7; cf. *Yogachūḍāmaṇi Upanishad* 72.
2. *Dīgha Nikāya* 33, *Saṅgīti Sutta*, PTSD3 p.219.

3. *E.g. Majjhima Nikāya* 140, *Dhātuvibhanga Sutta*, PTSD3 p.240.
4. *Māṇḍūkya Upanishad* 5.
5. *Vedāntasāra* 46.

**prakṛiti-parinirvṛita** (S), **rang bzhin gyis yongs su mya ngan las 'das pa** (T), **zìxìng nièpán** (C), **jishō nehan** (J) *Lit.* naturally (*prakṛiti*, *rang bzhin gyis*, *zìxìng*) completely (*pari*, *yongs su*) extinguished (*nirvṛita*, *mya ngan las 'das*, *nièpán*); inherently and fully extinguished; a term commonly encountered in the *Mahāyāna* Buddhist *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtras*, where it refers to the inherently quiescent state of all things. All things are described as being “unproduced (*anutpanna*), unceasing (*aniruddha*), primordially at peace (*ādishānta*), and intrinsically fully extinguished (*prakṛiti-parinirvṛita*)”.<sup>1</sup>

See also: **parinibbuta**.

1. See “prakṛtiparinirvṛita,” *Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, PDB.

**prakṛiti-prabhāsvara-chitta** (S), **'od gsal gyi sems** (T) *Lit.* natural form (*prakṛiti*) luminous (*prabhāsvara*) mind (*chitta*); clear light (*'od gsal*) of (*gyi*) the mind (*sems*); inherently radiant mind, primally luminous mind; the innate and naturally pure luminescence of the mind, realized when the mind is freed from all defilements.

The notion of an inherently luminous mind (S. *prakṛiti-prabhāsvara-chitta*,) has been a part of Buddhism since *Theravāda* times, later adopted by the *Mahāyāna* (especially the *tathāgata-garbha* school) and tantric traditions. It is a doctrine common to many Buddhist schools that the essential nature of the primordial mind or awareness is luminosity and emptiness (*shūnyatā*), devoid of human impurity, attachment or clinging to anything, and unfettered by dualistic and conceptual thought and perception. The *tathāgata-garbha* (embryo of buddhahood) tradition described all sentient beings as innately enlightened, just as the adult is essentially present in the embryo. This innate enlightenment or *buddha-nature* (*buddhadhātu*) is obscured by imperfections and impurities of various kinds.

According to a passage in the *Anguttara Nikāya*, commonly quoted in this context, the Buddha describes the pristine mind as luminous (*pabhassara*):

Monks, this mind (*citta*) is luminous (*pabhassara*),  
but it is defiled by incoming defilements (*upakkilesa*).

*Anguttara Nikāya* 1:49, PTSA1 p.10

See also: **prabhāsvara** (8.5).

**pramād(a)** (S/H), **pamāda** (Pa), **paramād** (Pu), **bag med pa** (T), **fàngyì** (C), **hōitsu** (J) *Lit.* carelessness, heedlessness, negligence, thoughtlessness, mindlessness, distraction; laziness, indolence; unawareness of oneself; a state of being mentally absent from oneself, negligent of the entry of negative or impure thoughts of any kind; a state in which the mind is allowed to wander freely from thought to thought, and from one sensory stimulus to another, without the exercise of any discrimination or conscious control; the normal state of most human beings; a term common to Hindu, Jain, and Buddhist texts; the converse of *apramāda* (heedfulness, vigilance, recollection, mindfulness), the state of being consciously recollected and concentrated in mind.

The *Upanishads* counsel the avoidance of heedlessness:

Heedlessness (*pramāda*) in *brahmanishṭha* (contemplation on *Brahman*) should not be permitted entry, even just a little. Knowers of *Brahman* consider carelessness regarding this science to be like death itself. Just as displaced water weed (in a pool) soon resumes its original position, so *māyā* envelops even the wise, should they become careless (even for a moment). He who attains the *kaivalya* state (absolute unity) during life becomes a *kevala* even after the death of his body. Ever devoted to *samādhi*, he becomes a *nirvikalpa* (changeless one)... The *granthi* (knot) of the heart, full of *ajñāna* (ignorance), is broken completely only when the *ātmā* sees itself as one without a second, through *nirvikalpa samādhi*.

*Adhyātma Upanishad 14–17; cf. TMU p.44*

The soul (*ātmā*) is not attained by the faint-hearted,  
nor through heedlessness (*pramāda*), nor by austerities.  
The wise (*vidvān*) who strive with vigour –  
their soul (*ātmā*) enters the dwelling place of *Brahman*.

*Muṇḍaka Upanishad 3:2.4*

In *Yama*'s (the king of Death) dialogue with the young seeker Nachiketas in the *Kaṭha Upanishad*, *Yama* explains that human beings are like heedless children, confused by materiality, as a result of which they return to this world in birth after birth, only to die again and again in delusion:

What lies beyond never reveals itself  
to the heedless (*pramāda*) child,  
befuddled by the delusion of wealth.  
Thinking, "Only this world exists, there is no other,"  
again and again he comes under my sway.

*Kaṭha Upanishad 1:2.6*



In the *Bhagavad Gītā*, Kṛiṣṇa observes that such heedlessness arises from the *guṇa* (attribute) of *tamas* (inertia, darkness):

Regarding *tamas*, it is born of ignorance,  
and creates delusion in all incarnate beings.  
It binds the soul with heedlessness (*pramāda*), indolence, and torpor. . .  
*Sattva* binds one to happiness, and *rajas* to activity,  
but *tamas* veils understanding (*jñāna*),  
and binds one to heedlessness (*pramāda*).  
When *tamas* dominates, lack of intelligence,  
lack of effort, heedlessness (*pramāda*), and also delusion arise.

*Bhagavad Gītā* 14:8–9, 13; cf. BGT

Patañjali lists *pramāda* as one of the obstacles to spiritual progress:

Disease, indolence, doubt, heedlessness (*pramāda*),  
lethargy, worldliness, erroneous perception,  
lack of concentration, instability –  
These are causes of mental distraction, and they are obstacles.

*Patañjali, Yoga Sūtras* 1:30

Shankara explains in greater detail:

There is no greater danger for the seeker (*jñānin*) than heedlessness (*pramāda*) concerning his own real nature. From this arises delusion, then egoism, and this is followed by bondage, and then misery. . .

If the mind strays from the Ideal even slightly, and becomes outgoing, then it goes down and down, just as a play-ball negligently (*pramādatā*) dropped on a staircase bounces down from one step to another. . .

Hence, to the discriminating knower of *Brahman*, there is no worse death than heedlessness (*pramāda*) with regard to concentration. But the man who is concentrated attains complete success. Therefore, carefully concentrate your mind.

Through heedlessness (*pramāda*), a man deviates from his own real nature, and the man who has thus deviated falls. The fallen man comes to ruin, and is scarcely seen to rise again.

*Shankara, Vivekachūḍāmaṇi* 322, 325, 327–28; cf. VCSM pp.122–24

The term appears throughout Buddhist literature, especially among the Pali texts, often in conjunction with its opposite *appamāda* (Pa). In the *Pamādavahārin Sutta* of the *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, the Buddha describes how passing heedlessly through life permits worldly impressions to lodge

in the mind and take away all joy, rapture, and tranquillity. The result is suffering:

How does one dwell in heedlessness (*pamāda*)? When a monk dwells without restraint over the faculty of the eye, the mind (*citta*) is stained with forms cognizable by the eye. When the mind is stained, there is no joy (*pāmuja*). When there is no joy, there is no rapture (*pīti*). When there is no rapture, there is no tranquillity (*passaddhi*). When there is no tranquillity, one dwells in suffering (*dukkha*). The mind of one who suffers does not become concentrated. When the mind is unconcentrated, it does not become apparent that phenomena are transient. When it does not become apparent that phenomena are transient, one is reckoned as one who dwells in heedlessness (*pamāda*).

*Samyutta Nikāya* 35:97, *Pamādavihārin Sutta*, *PTSS4* p.78; cf. *CDBB* p.1179

The text then repeats the same for sensory input to ear, the nose, the tongue, bodily touch, and ideas that stain the thinking mind. The reverse is then repeated for one who dwells in heedfulness (*appamāda*).<sup>1</sup>

In Jainism, *pramāda* is regarded as one of the primary causes of bondage (*bandha*) – the mental activities that cause an influx of karmic matter (*bhāvāsrava*) into the soul. The fifth-century Sarvārthasiddhi enumerates five commonly listed causes:<sup>2</sup>

*Mithyā-darshana* (false belief, wrong perception), *avirati* (intemperance, lack of self-control, non-abstinence), *pramāda* (heedlessness), *kashāya* (passions), *yoga* (activity of body and mind) are the causes of bondage.

*Sarvārthasiddhi*, *Pūjyapāda* 8:1; cf. in *RPSJ* p.215

See also: **apramāda**.

1. *Samyutta Nikāya* 35:97, *Pamādavihārin Sutta*, *PTSS4* pp.78–79, *CDBB* pp.1179–80.

2. See also, e.g. Āchārya Umāswāmī, *Tattvārtha Sūtra* 1:8.

**pramāṇa** (S), **pamāṇa** (Pa) *Lit.* measure, scale; criticism; hence, any means of proof, testimony, or evidence; criterion; a means of acquiring evidence or valid knowledge (*pramā*); certain knowledge; a term used in Indian, Buddhist, and Jain epistemology (theory of knowledge).

According to *Vedānta*, there are six *pramāṇas* or means of acquiring knowledge of something: *pratyaksha* (direct experience); *anumāna* (inference); *upamāna* (analogy); *śabda* (scriptural) or *āptavākya* (verbal authority, especially of a yogi, mystic, or genuine holy man), also called *āgama*;

*arthāpatti* (presumption, inference from circumstances); and *anupalabdhi* (non-perception) or *abhāva pratyaksha* (absence of perception).

Of the schools of Indian philosophy, *Nyāya* excludes the last two, while *Sāṃkhya* accepts only *pratyaksha*, *anumāna*, and *śabda*. Other schools increase the number of *pramāṇas* to nine by including *sambhava* (equivalence), *aitihya* (tradition, fallible testimony), and *cheshṭā* (gesture). In the *Yoga Sūtras*, Patañjali enumerates *pratyaksha* as one of three *pramāṇas*,<sup>1</sup> the other two being *anumāna* (inference) and *āgama* (verbal testimony from a trustworthy source).

In Buddhist epistemology, only *pratyaksha* and *anumāna* are regarded as valid *pramāṇas*. The primary works on this subject are Dignāga's (c.480–540) *Pramāṇa-samuchchaya*, and Dharmakīrti's (fl.c.6th–7th) *Pramāṇa-vārttika*, both written in Sanskrit verse, with Dharmakīrti building upon the work of Dignāga.

Jain philosophy subdivides and elaborates the various modes of knowledge (*jñāna*), valid knowledge (*pramāṇa*), self-evident knowledge (*pratyaksha*) and non-self-evident knowledge (*paroksha*) into an extensive and detailed system with many sub-categories, concerning which there are various schools of thought.

Jain philosophers have also distinguished between *pramāṇa*, which refers to something as it actually is, and *naya*, which deals with knowledge of something in relationship to other things. *Pramāṇa* is full, unanalysed knowledge of the thing as it is in itself, while *naya* is a perspective or viewpoint concerning some aspect of that thing. Everything has innumerable qualities, aspects, and characteristics. *Naya* is an analytical study of these qualities, and it is often said that many *nayas* (perspectives) spring from *pramāṇa*. *Pramāṇa* therefore comes first, followed by *naya*. *Pramāṇa* reveals the whole of something, while *naya* deals only with particular aspects, and consequently consists of only partial truths. Nevertheless, though they may differ from each other, true *nayas* are not held to contradict or overturn other *nayas*. Each is regarded as valid within its own sphere of reference. A *naya* that is believed to deny all other perspectives is not regarded as a true *naya*.

See also: **anumāna**, **nayavāda**, **pratyaksha**.

1. Patañjali, *Yoga Sūtras* 1:7.

**pramoda**, **prāmodya** (S), **pāmojja**, **pāmuḍḍa** (Pa) *Lit.* great (*pra*) + delight (*moda*); satisfaction, gladness, happiness, joy, bliss; used for both worldly delight and happiness as well as spiritual joy or bliss.

Among the *Upanishads*, the *Taittirīya Upanishad* describes the *ānandamaya-kosha* (covering made of bliss) – which corresponds to the astral body – as a covering or body of great spiritual joy that lies within the

*viññānamaya-kosha* (covering made of knowledge). One aspect of this spiritual joy is said to be *pramoda* (delight). The *viññānamaya-kosha* corresponds to the part of the human mind that contains the faculties of intellect:

Distinct from and within this (*viññānamaya-kosha*),  
 which consists of the essence of the intellect,  
 is another self, consisting of bliss (*ānanda*).  
 By this, the former is filled.  
 This, too, has a human form.  
 The human shape of the latter  
 is like the human shape of the former.  
 Its head is love (*priya*),  
 its right wing (arm) is joy (*moda*),  
 its left wing (arm) is delight (*pramoda*),  
 its trunk is bliss (*ānanda*);  
 Its tail is *Brahman*, its support.

*Taittirīya Upanishad* 2:5.2

The *Kaṭha Upanishad*, on the other hand, unfavourably contrasts the ephemeral “beauty, pleasure and delight (*pramoda*)” of life in this world with the joys of immortal life.<sup>1</sup>

In Jainism, the ninth-century philosopher and logician Vidyānanda lists *pramoda* as one of the ten qualities of the Buddha: *kshamā* (forgiveness), *maitrī* (lovingkindness), *dhyāna* (contemplation), *dāna* (generosity), *vīrya* (vigour, energy), *śīla* (pure conduct), *prajñā* (wisdom), *kāruṇya* (compassion), *upāya* (expediency), and *pramoda* (joy).<sup>2</sup>

However, *pramoda* is more commonly understood in Jainism as a feeling of happiness, affection and appreciation (*pramoda bhāvanā*, feeling of appreciation) regarding the spiritual qualities and merits of others, especially of those who use their lives or their material wealth for the benefit of others. This is also called *guṇa-pramoda* (delight in virtues), which implies recognition and appreciation of the good qualities or virtues of others. *Pramoda* is listed by Āchārya Umāswāmī along with *maitrī*, *kāruṇya* and *mādhyasthya* (middle state, impartiality, tolerance of others) as the correct feelings to entertain towards others.<sup>3</sup>

In Buddhism, *pāmojja* (also spelled *pāmuja*) is one of several terms used in the Pali *suttas* to describe the degrees of bliss and tranquillity experienced during meditation. Commonly encountered terms include *pīti* (rapture), *passaddhi* (tranquillity) and *sukha* (bliss), which are used with both general and specific meanings, with *pāmojja* sometimes included in the series. According to the *Sāmaññaphala Sutta* and in several other *suttas*,<sup>4</sup> the one leads to the other after overcoming the five hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*) of sensory desire, ill will, sloth and torpor, restlessness and anxiety, and wavering doubt or lack of conviction:

When he knows that these five hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*) have left him, gladness (*pāmojja*) arises in him; from gladness comes rapture (*pīti*); from the rapture (*pīti*) in his mind his body is made tranquil (*passambhati*); with a tranquil body he feels bliss (*sukha*); and with bliss (*sukha*) his mind is concentrated (*samādhiyati*). Being thus detached from sense desires, detached from unwholesome states, he enters and remains in the first *jhāna*.

*Dīgha Nikāya 2, Sāmaññaphala Sutta, PTSD1 p.73; cf. TBLD p.102*

In the *Paṭṭhapāda Sutta*, the Buddha assures the itinerant seeker *Paṭṭhapāda* that ridding oneself of “defiling mental qualities (*sankilesikā*)” is worth the effort, for it results in a blissful state of mind:

If defiling mental qualities (*sankilesikā*) are abandoned and bright mental qualities grow strong, and one enters and remains in the purity and perfection of wisdom, having known and realized it for oneself in the here and now, then there is nothing but joy (*pāmuja*), rapture (*pīti*), tranquillity (*passaddhi*), mindfulness (*sati*), and clear understanding (*sampajañña*) – and that is a blissful (*sukha*) state.

*Dīgha Nikāya 9, Paṭṭhapāda Sutta, PTSD1 p.196; cf. TBLD p.167, DNTB*

See also: **ānanda**.

1. *Kaṭha Upanishad* 1:1.28.
2. Āchārya Vidyānanda, *Aṣṭasāhasrī*, AVVN pp.50–51.
3. Āchārya Umāswāmī, *Tattvārtha Sūtra* 7:11.
4. E.g. *Majjhima Nikāya* 7, *Vatthūpama Sutta*, PTSM1 p.37; *Samyutta Nikāya* 9:11 (*Ayoniso Sutta*), PTSS1 p.203, 12:23 (*Upanisa Sutta*), PTSS2 p.30.

**prapañcha** (S), **papañca** (Pa), **spros pa** (T), **xìlùn** (C), **keron** (J) *Lit.* proliferation, expansion, development; manifoldness, diversity, multiplicity, diffuseness; amplification, elaboration (*spros pa*), prolixity; the multiplicity of phenomena; the mental proliferation of thoughts and concepts; illusory dialogue (*xìlùn*, *keron*). The Pali *papañca* is ambiguous and can also be derived from *pada* (foot), in which instances it means ‘obstacle’, ‘hindrance’, ‘impediment’, ‘delay’.

As a Buddhist technical term, *papañca* is used with two overlapping meanings. Firstly, it characterizes both the world of transient phenomena and the mind’s attraction to its multiplicity and diversity. Secondly, it refers to the mind’s ability to identify the differences that prevail in things of the mind and senses, which leads automatically to a sense of duality. Because of this, *papañca* also confers the capacity to function in the realm of duality.

Although in some Buddhist contexts, the specific meaning remains unclear, *papañca* generally conveys a negative connotation. The commentaries on the Pali *suttas* understand *papañca* to cover three areas of negative thinking: *taṇhā* (craving), *māna* (pride), and *diṭṭhi* (views, specifically false views or notions). Together, these three represent a proliferation of negative thoughts, the driving force behind them being a false sense of identity. It is through the illusory I-ness underlying craving, pride and false views that individual experience is embellished by personal mental activity, such that the fundamental cognition of things as they are is obscured. Things are perceived, but the mind thinks so much about them that the basic perceptions are overlain by a multiplicity of thoughts. The Chinese translation of *prapañcha* as *xìlùn* (illusory dialogue, futile chatter) indicates its characteristic of obscuring what should be straightforward perception and awareness.<sup>1</sup>

According to the *Mahākoṭṭhita Sutta*, the realm of multiplicity (*papañca*) is that of the “six spheres of sense contact (*cha-phassāyatana*)” – of the five senses together with that aspect of the mind that engages in sense perception. Only by rising above the realm of the mind and senses (by means of meditation) is involvement with multiplicity brought to an end:

As far as the range (*gati*) of the six spheres of sense contact (*cha-phassāyatana*) extends, just so far does the range of multiplicity (*papañca*) extend; as far as the range of multiplicity (*papañca*) extends, just so far does the range of the six spheres of sense contact extend. Through the complete fading away and cessation of the six spheres of sense contact, there arises the cessation of multiplicity (*papañca*) and the coming to rest of multiplicity (*papañca*).

*Anguttara Nikāya* 4:174, *Mahākoṭṭhita Sutta*, PTSA2 pp.161–62

The *Dhammapada* puts it simply:

Mankind delights in multiplicity (*papañca*):  
the *tathāgatas* (*buddhas*) are free from multiplicity (*nippapañca*).

*Dhammapada* 18:20

Likewise, according to the *Anuruddha Sutta*, the eighth distinguishing thought of a great man (*mahāpurisa*) is:

The *Dhamma* is for one who delights in freedom from multiplicity (*nippapañca*), ... not for one who delights in multiplicity (*papañca*).

*Anguttara Nikāya* 8:30, *Anuruddha Sutta*, PTSA4 p.229

In the *Madhupiṇḍika Sutta*, *prapañcha* refers to the characteristic of mental processes that leads to the perception of difference, duality, and multiplicity. The Buddha observes that taking delight in and holding on to human

weaknesses leads to negative behaviour. If a person ceases to entertain and enjoy these proliferations of the mind, then that is an end to them and of any resultant behaviour:

As to the source through which perceptions and notions born of mental proliferation (*papañca*) beset a man: if nothing is found there to delight in, welcome and hold to, this is the end of the underlying tendency to lust (*rāga*), ... anger (*paṭigha*), ... views (*diṭṭhi*), ... doubt (*vicikicchā*), ... conceit (*māna*), ... desire for being (*bhavarāga*), ... and ignorance (*avijjā*); this is the end of resorting to staffs and weapons, of quarrels, brawls, disputes, recrimination, malicious words, and false speech; here these evil unwholesome (*akusala*) states cease without a trace.

*Majjhima Nikāya 18, Madhupiṇḍika Sutta, PTSM1 pp.109–10*

The Venerable Mahākaccāna observes that this division and proliferation (*papañca*) disturb and confuse all further perceptions of the mind and senses:

Whatever a man conceives (*vitakketi*), that he differentiates (*papañceti*); and what he differentiates (*papañceti*), that he mentally proliferates. Whatever he mentally proliferates, the perceptions and notions born of mental proliferation (*papañca*) beset him with respect to past, present, and future cognitions.

*Majjhima Nikāya 18, Madhupiṇḍika Sutta, PTSM1 p.112*

The root of all mental activity is the false sense of I-ness. In the *Tuvaṭṭaka Sutta* of the *Sutta Nipāta*, the Buddha responds to the query of every spiritual seeker: how to attain enlightenment? At the outset, the Buddha advises elimination of the mental proliferations that result in the sense of I-ness:

I asked that kinsman of the sun, the great sage,  
concerning peace and detachment:  
“How can a monk become unbound (find *nibbāna*),  
clinging to nothing of the world?”

(The Blessed One replied:)

“Put an end to the perceptions and notions  
born of mental proliferation (*papañca*)  
that make you think, ‘I exist.’

Always be mindful, practise at all times,  
subdue all cravings that arise within you.

“Take no pride in whatever understanding  
you may gain, inner or outer,  
for good men know that that too is not unbinding (*nibbuti*).

Do not consider that such insights  
make you better or worse than others, or their equal.”

*Sutta Nipāta 4:14, Tuvaṭṭaka Sutta, PTSN pp.178–79*

The *Madhyamaka* school also maintain that the most damaging form of *prapañcha* is belief in one’s own innate existence (*svabhāva*). Some Buddhist schools have used *prapañcha* in a more specific sense. In *Yogācāra*, *prapañcha* is used as a term for the mental process that leads to the illusion of perceiver (*grāhaka*) and perceived (*grāhya*). In this context, it is more or less synonymous with *vikalpa* (discernment of differences), *manojalpa* (mental chatter), and *vichāra* (reflection, evaluation, discursive thought).

See also: **vikalpa**.

1. For this discussion, see Ñāṇananda Bhikkhu, *Concept and Reality*, CREB; Bhikkhu Bodhi, Notes to *Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha*, MDBB pp.1204–5 (n.229); Kurt Schmidt, “Void is the World,” WH74–75 pp.34–38; Sister Vajira, *Sakka’s Quest*, WH10 pp.10–12.

**pratisaṃkhyā-nirodha** (S), **so sor brtags ’gog pa** (T), **zémiè** (C), **chakumetsu** (J)  
*Lit.* cessation (*nirodha*, ’gog pa, miè, metsu) by analysis (*pratisaṃkhyā*, so sor brtags, zé, chaku); cessation (*nirodha*) arising from effort and reflection (*pratisaṃkhyā*); the elimination of some aspect of mind function or mental phenomenon (*dharma*) or impurity (*klesha*) by insight and analysis of that *dharma*; contrasted with *apratisaṃkhyā-nirodha*, which is elimination or absence of the same that is not occasioned by insight, conscious effort and the intention to get rid of it, but which happens unconsciously in the absence of the conditions necessary for its re-emergence. Since Buddhist philosophy understands *nirvāṇa* as the elimination or cessation of all impurities (*kleshas*), *pratisaṃkhyā-nirodha* and *apratisaṃkhyā-nirodha* are also regarded as forms of *nirvāṇa*.

While the elimination of impurities by means of *pratisaṃkhyā-nirodha* is considered permanent because it is arrived at consciously, *apratisaṃkhyā-nirodha* is generally regarded as impermanent due to the lack of conscious intention. Dormant impurities may resurface whenever opportune circumstances present themselves. According to the *Vaibhāshika* school, however, in *apratisaṃkhyā-nirodha* the circumstances that would lead to the re-emergence of the impurities are permanently suppressed, only able to emerge in a future that never comes, and therefore unable to disturb the present.

*Pratisaṃkhyā*- and *apratisaṃkhyā-nirodha* are terms first used in the *Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma* (founded C2nd–1st BCE) school of early scholastic Sanskrit Buddhism. The *Abhidharma* (Pa. *Abhidhamma*) schools aimed to identify and describe all possible varieties of materio-mental experience



(*dharma*s) in respect of their constituent factors and relationships. Essentially, they attempted to create a comprehensive psychological and metaphysical analysis of what makes human beings what they are.

The *Sarvāstivāda* school describes seventy-five *dharma*s (mental factors or phenomena), which are divided into two categories – relative or conditioned (*saṃskṛita*) and absolute or unconditioned (*asaṃskṛita*). Conditioned *dharma*s include the multiple aspects of the five aggregates (*skandha*s), which comprise all the materio-mental aspects of existence. Conditioned things are essentially impure because impurities cling to them. The number of unconditioned *dharma*s listed varies from school to school, but the three most commonly listed are: space (*ākāśa*), *pratisaṃkhyā-nirodha*, and *apratisaṃkhyā-nirodha*. Space is a pure *dharma* because it causes no hindrance to matter, nor is space displaced by matter. *Pratisaṃkhyā-* and *apratisaṃkhyā-nirodha* are considered pure by their very nature. The subject was further analysed by the Buddhist scholar Vasubandhu (C4th–5th CE), co-founder of the *Yogācāra* school, in his *Abhidharmakośa Bhāṣya*. In fact, a variety of scholastic opinions prevailed in the different *Abhidharma* schools, some so intellectually fanciful that they can bear little relationship to the Reality sought by the true seeker, Buddhist or otherwise.

See also: **apratisaṃkhyā-nirodha, asaṃskṛita-dharma.**

**pratishṭhita nirvāṇa** (S), **gnas pa'i mya ngan las 'das pa** (T), **zhù nièpán** (C), **jū nehan** (J) *Lit.* abiding (*pratishṭhita*, *gnas pa*, *zhù*) *nirvāṇa* (*mya ngan las 'das*, *nièpán*); a *Mahāyāna* term for the permanent *nirvāṇa* entered by a *Theravāda* *arhat* (noble one, enlightened one) at the time of his death; the equivalent of *parinirvāṇa* or remainderless *nirvāṇa* (*nirupadhisheshā nirvāṇa*); contrasted with the *apratisṭhita* (non-abiding, non-permanent) *nirvāṇa* of a *buddha* who attains *nirvāṇa*, but chooses to remain in *saṃsāra* ('wandering', transmigration) in order to help sentient beings attain *nirvāṇa*. See **apratisṭhita nirvāṇa**.

**pratyaksha, pratyaksha-jñāna** (S/H) *Lit.* knowledge (*jñāna*) near (*prati*) eyes (*aksha*). *Pratyaksha* means perceptible, visible, in sight, before the eyes; hence, evident, clear, direct, immediate. In Indian philosophy, it implies knowledge presented to one's eyes; thus, direct perception or cognition through the senses; knowledge that is complete in itself and therefore self-evident; knowledge that comes with its own touchstone of validity; experiential knowledge; hence, either knowledge or information that is obtained through the senses, and is therefore evident; or, direct inner perception and true mystic knowledge.

Perception is of two kinds – ordinary (*laukika*) or extraordinary (*alaukika*). The former is obtained through the physical senses, while the latter is gained

without their help, through the mind and also through direct perception, as in the spiritual experiences of yogis and mystics.

Ordinary perception itself may also be external (*bāhya*) or internal (*antara* or *mānasa*, of the mind) depending on whether the perception comes through an external organ like the eye or the ear; or comes through a part of a human being's internal 'organs', *i.e.* directly through the mind and its inner perceptive faculties, or through the soul. All these and other forms of direct, experiential perception are termed *pratyaksha*.

*Pratyaksha* is the first of six categories of evidence or valid knowledge (*pramāṇas*) according to *Vedānta*. However, there are differences of opinion between the various schools of Indian philosophy regarding which may be truly regarded as valid means of acquiring knowledge. The Vaisheshika school, for instance, maintains that there are only two valid means of acquiring knowledge – *pratyaksha* and *anumāna* (inference).

The Vaisheshika position was introduced into Buddhism by the influential Indian Buddhist philosopher Dignāga (c.480–540). Dignāga was one of several Indian Buddhist philosophers who introduced Indian epistemology to Buddhism. These included Vasubandhu (*fl.c.* C4th–5th), one of the main founders of the *Yogācāra* school following his conversion to *Mahāyāna* Buddhism, and Dharmakīrti (*fl.c.* C6th–7th), who built on the work of Dignāga. Dharmakīrti identified four kinds of *pratyaksha*:

1. *Indriya pratyaksha*. Perception through the five senses (*indriyas*), each sense acting as a medium for the play of consciousness.
2. *Mānasa pratyaksha*. Mental (*mānasa*) perception, which follows immediately after the perception of the gross sense organ. The mind, stimulated by input from the senses, registers the input, preparing the ground for later conceptualization (*kalpanā*) and consideration.
3. *Svasaṃvedanā pratyaksha*. One's own (*sva*) perception (*saṃvedanā*); awareness of one's own self, a mental faculty that arises from the mind's capacity to be aware of itself. It is described as being like a lamp that not only spreads light upon its surroundings but also upon itself. This faculty is employed in meditation, when the mind seeks to understand the nature of its own being. Known as the self-luminosity theory of consciousness (*svayamprakāśa-vāda*), the insight was a unique contribution of Dignāga to Buddhist epistemology.
4. *Yogī pratyaksha*, *yogī jñāna*. The gnosis (*jñāna*) or perception of a yogi; the perception of a mystic in deep meditation or *samādhi*; a transcendental state of awareness and perception in which things are seen as they really are, free of any mental constructs; a superconscious state in which higher

knowledge of the workings of the universe is revealed; ultimately, the omniscience of a *buddha*.

According to Vasubandhu, in a constantly changing, impermanent and perishable world in which the perceiving subject, the perceived object, and the activity of perception itself are all momentary and fleeting, direct perception (*pratyaksha*) is impossible. As soon as an object is directly perceived by the senses, thought and judgment arise leading to conceptual discrimination or conceptual construction (*kalpanā*) that is automatically biased by previous knowledge of the object itself or of similar objects. This can also be called imagination or illusion, and is why sensory perceptions may be regarded as little better than dream experiences in which things are different from what they appear to be.

In general, Indian philosophy regards knowledge acquired from the senses as *pratyaksha*. Early Jain philosophers, however, such as the fourth- or fifth-century Āchārya Umāswāmī, only accepted knowledge that comes from the soul as being *pratyaksha*.<sup>1</sup> In a mystical sense, this is in line with the observations of other mystical paths. Sensory knowledge is therefore regarded as indirect (*paroksha*), since knowledge or experience of the physical universe does not constitute direct knowledge or experience of the highest Truth or Reality.

Some later Jain philosophers, such as the sixth- or seventh-century Jinabhadra and the eighth-century Akalanka, have accepted sensory knowledge as a lesser form of *pratyaksha*. According to their analysis, *pratyaksha* is of two kinds, *sāmvyavahārika* (everyday perception) and *pāramārthika* (higher, transcendental, or mystic perception, *i.e.* gnosis).<sup>2</sup> *Sāmvyavahārika* is further divided into *indriya-nivandhana* (coming through the senses) and *anindriya-nivandhana* (not coming through the senses, *i.e.* coming through the mind).

Other Jain philosophers have named the two primary forms of *pratyaksha* as *ātmā* (soul) *pratyaksha* and *indriya* (sense) *pratyaksha*, the latter including knowledge acquired by the various faculties of the human mind such as learning, reason, and so on. *Āmapratyaksha* (also called *paramārtha pratyaksha*, knowledge of the highest truth) is further subdivided into *sakala* (total) *pratyaksha*, which refers to the highest omniscience (*kevala-jñāna*) of the soul, and *vikala* (partial) *pratyaksha*, which consists of lesser soul-knowledge such as clairvoyance (*avadhi-jñāna*, limited knowledge) and mental telepathy (*manah-paryāya-jñāna*, knowledge of another's mind).<sup>3</sup>

Jain philosophy has further subdivided and elaborated the various modes of knowledge (*jñāna*), valid knowledge (*pramāṇa*), self-evident knowledge (*pratyaksha*) and non-self-evident or indirect knowledge (*paroksha*) into an extensive and detailed system, concerning which there are various schools of thought.

Mystics generally do not enter into the realm of intellectual analysis. They are interested in personal experience of Reality. As the *Bhagavad Gītā* says, the highest mystical knowledge is a matter of direct experience (*pratyaksha*):

I shall now declare to you – you who never quibble – that profoundest of all knowledge (*jñāna*) and the way to its realization, by which you will be free from all troubles.

This sovereign science (*rāja-vidyā*) and sovereign mystery is supremely sanctifying, capable of direct experience (*pratyaksha*), and yields eternal results. It is also easy to practise, and is in accordance with *dharma*.

*Bhagavad Gītā 9:1–2, BGT*

Swami Vivekananda also says that the proof of God is not a matter of reason, but of personal experience:

What is the proof of God? Direct perception, *pratyaksha*. The proof of this wall is that I perceive it. God has been perceived that way by thousands before, and will be perceived by all who want to perceive Him. But this perception is no sense perception at all; it is supersensuous, superconscious, and all this training (in meditation) is needed to take us beyond the senses.

*Swami Vivekananda, Steps to Realization, CWSV1 pp.415–16*

The proof, therefore, of the *Vedas* is just the same as the proof of this table before me – *pratyaksha*, direct perception. This I see with the senses; and the truths of spirituality we also see in a superconscious state of the human soul. This *rishi*-state is not limited by time or place, by sex or race.

*Swami Vivekananda, Sages of India, CWSV3 p.253*

See also: **jñāna**, **paroksha**.

1. Āchārya Umāswāmī, *Tattvārtha Sūtra* 1:12.
2. See Pushpa Bothra, *Jain Theory of Perception, JTPB* p.31ff.
3. See D.M. Shastri, *Source Book in Jaina Philosophy, SBJP* p.395.

**pratyātmādhigama** (S), **so sor rang gis rig pa** (T), **nèizhèng** (C), **naishō** (J)  
*Lit.* personal (*pratyātma*, *so sor rang gis*) realization (*adhigama*, *rig pa*); inner (*nèi*) confirmation (*zhèng*); specifically, the understanding and inner realization of a *buddha*, which is beyond all dualistic concepts and description, and in which the knower, the act of knowing and that which is known are united. It is this experience that a *buddha* or enlightened being tries to convey in words and concepts, so that suffering sentient beings may seek enlightenment and liberation from *saṃsāra*.

See also: **adhigama**.

**prayer of quiet** (Sp. *oración de quietud*) A state of deep interior prayer in which the physical senses are completely asleep or inactive, and the faculties of memory and understanding are either at rest or entirely suspended; described by a number of the Spanish mystics, following Francisco de Osuna and St Teresa of Ávila; experienced in the fourth mansions of the interior life, according to St Teresa's portrayal of the interior life of the soul, and following on from the prayer of recollection, also experienced in the fourth mansions. The prayer of quiet, says St Teresa, "is accompanied by the greatest peace and quietness and sweetness within ourselves: I cannot say where it arises or how."<sup>1</sup>

The fluidity of mystical states makes them very difficult for mystical writers to categorize, except in the broadest of terms. Consequently, there are variations not only between writers, but also in an individual writer's descriptions of the same state.

The Spanish mystics often speak of three faculties of the soul – the memory, the understanding (which includes the intellect) and the will, to which St Teresa adds the imagination. For Osuna, in the prayer of quiet, the physical senses are unable to disturb the peace of the soul, if indeed their input is even registered. The senses have been "discarded",<sup>2</sup> or they "sleep to every creature",<sup>3</sup> or the "windows of the senses are closed."<sup>4</sup> Likewise, St Teresa says:

Some ... are so entirely carried out of themselves in this act of deep recollection that they are unconscious of everything external, and all their senses are in such a state of slumber that they are like a person asleep.

*Teresa of Ávila, Interior Castle 6:3, CWTA2 p.283*

At the same time, says Osuna, "the memory (is) at rest and the understanding stilled", adding:<sup>5</sup>

You must most inwardly hush the memory and still the understanding; ... nor when you begin to feel the communion of the Lord should you speak loving words, even though they seem good to you, and your soul delights in them.

*Francisco de Osuna, Third Spiritual Alphabet 21:7,*

*NBA16 p.572; cf. in SSM1 p.88 (n.5)*

All thought is held in abeyance. Even the temptation to utter words of love (mentally) is to be resisted. The understanding is "in darkness" and the "natural powers cease".<sup>6</sup> Only the will remains: "When the understanding has ceased its speculations, the will issues with great power, producing love."<sup>7</sup>

Nevertheless, according to Osuna, the understanding is never entirely quenched, except for the briefest of moments: "It always retains a tiny spark, sufficient only for those that are in this state to recognize that they have something that is of God."<sup>8</sup> For St Teresa, the prayer of quiet follows on from the prayer of recollection. In *Life*, she explains:

This state, in which the soul begins to recollect itself, borders on the supernatural, to which it could in no way attain by its own exertions. . . . This state is a recollecting of the faculties within the soul, so that its fruition of that contentment may be of greater delight. But the faculties are not lost, nor do they sleep. The will alone is occupied, in such a way that, without knowing how, it becomes captive. . . . The other two faculties help the will so that it may become more and more capable of enjoying so great a blessing, though sometimes it comes about that, even when the will is in union, they hinder it exceedingly. When that happens, it should take no notice of them but remain in its fruition and quiet; for, if it tries to recollect them, both it and they will suffer. . . . Sometimes the memory or the imagination may do it harm by trying to present it with a picture of what it is enjoying. The will, then, must be careful in its dealings with them.

*Teresa of Ávila, Life 14, CWTA1 pp.83–84*

The faculties, she maintains, though recollected, “are not lost, nor do they sleep”. Again in *Life*, she adds:

This quiet and recollectedness in the soul makes itself felt largely through the satisfaction and peace which it brings to it, together with a very great joy and repose of the faculties and a most sweet delight. As the soul has never gone beyond this stage, it thinks there is no more left for it to desire. . . . It dares not move or stir, for it thinks that if it does so this blessing may slip from its grasp: sometimes it would like to be unable even to breathe. . . .

I have already said that, in this first state of recollection and quiet, the faculties of the soul do not fail; but the soul has such satisfaction in God that, although the other two faculties may be distracted, yet, since the will is in union with God for as long as the recollection lasts, its quiet and repose are not lost, but the will gradually brings the understanding and memory back to a state of recollection again. For, although the will is not yet completely absorbed, it is so well occupied, without knowing how, that whatever the efforts made by the understanding and memory, they cannot deprive it of its contentment and rejoicing: indeed, without any labour on its part, it helps to prevent this little spark of love for God from being quenched.

*Teresa of Ávila, Life 15, CWTA1 pp.88–89*

In a later writing, however, with the benefit of further experience, she corrects herself, saying that the prayer of quiet does indeed involve “a sleep of the faculties”.<sup>9</sup>

See also: **prayer of recollection, quietude, recollection** (8.5).

1. Teresa of Ávila, *Interior Castle* 4:2, CWT2 p.237.
2. Francisco de Osuna, *Third Spiritual Alphabet* 21:7, NBA16 p.570ff.; cf. in SSM1 p.86.
3. Francisco de Osuna, *Third Spiritual Alphabet* 13:4, NBA16 p.468ff., in SSM1 p.85.
4. Francisco de Osuna, *Third Spiritual Alphabet* 12:2, NBA16 p.453ff.; cf. in SSM1 p.83.
5. Francisco de Osuna, *Third Spiritual Alphabet* 21:5, NBA16 p.567, in SSM1 p.88 (n.5).
6. Francisco de Osuna, *Third Spiritual Alphabet*, *passim*, in SSM1 p.88.
7. Francisco de Osuna, *Third Spiritual Alphabet* 21:5, NBA16 p.566, in SSM1 p.89 (n.1).
8. Francisco de Osuna, *Third Spiritual Alphabet* 21:7, NBA16 p.570ff.; cf. in SSM1 p.87.
9. Teresa of Ávila, *Life* 16, CWT1 p.97.

**prayer of recollection** (Sp. *oración de recogimiento*) A state of interior prayer in which the mind is ‘re-collected’ or withdrawn within itself; withdrawal of the senses from the world and of the mind from the senses; described by a number of the Spanish mystics, especially Teresa of Ávila, whose terminology was used by many later writers, though not always in the same way; the first awakenings and discovery of the true interior life of contemplation.

In the *Interior Castle*, St Teresa describes the prayer of recollection as a part of the “fourth mansions”, where it is a prelude and preparation for the more interiorly recollected prayer of quiet. The Spanish mystics often speak of three faculties of the ‘soul’ – the memory, the understanding (which includes the intellect), and the will, to which St Teresa adds the imagination. In the prayer of recollection, says St Teresa, although the will is powerfully attracted towards God, the understanding is still trying to find something to occupy it, and

when it finds it cannot understand what it desires, . . . it roams about all over the place, like a demented creature, and can settle down to nothing. The will is fixed so firmly upon its God that this disturbed condition of the understanding causes it (the will) great distress; but it must not take any notice of this, for if it does so it will lose a great part of what it is enjoying. It must forget about it, and abandon itself into the arms of love, and His Majesty will teach it what to do next; almost its whole work is to realize its unworthiness to receive such great good and to occupy itself in thanksgiving.

*Teresa of Ávila, Interior Castle* 4:3, CWT2 p.244

It is, she says, as if the soul had put out to sea, but is not yet out of sight of land. So it does what it can, by recollecting or withdrawing itself from the senses.<sup>1</sup>



This is the beginning of the soul's withdrawal into an interior place, a place which she describes as a "dilation or enlargement of the soul"<sup>2</sup> – in modern terms, an expansion of consciousness. It is also a condition of "entering into solitude with God".<sup>3</sup> She continues:

It is as if the soul were rising from play, for it sees that worldly things are nothing but toys; so in due course it rises above them. . . . It withdraws the senses from all outward things, and spurns them so completely that, without its understanding how, its eyes close and it can no longer see external things, and the soul's spiritual sight becomes clear.

Those who walk along this path almost invariably close their eyes when they say their prayers; this, for many reasons, is an admirable custom, since it means that they are making an effort not to look at things of the world. The effort has to be made only at the beginning; later it becomes unnecessary: eventually, in fact, it would cost a greater effort to open the eyes during prayer than to close them.

*Teresa of Ávila, Way of Perfection 28; cf. CWTA2 p.116*

The soul then gathers strength, she says, at the expense of the body and its senses. It is a struggle, but slowly the senses surrender and relinquish their domination, after which they become "captive" to the will, permitting it to enter within as desired:

If we cultivate the habit, make the necessary effort, . . . the benefits will reveal themselves, and when we begin to pray we shall realize that the bees are coming to the hive and entering it to make the honey, and all without any effort of ours. For it is the Lord's will that, in return for the time which their efforts have cost them, the soul and the will should be given this power over the senses. They will only have to make a sign to show that they wish to enter into recollection and the senses will obey and allow themselves to be recollected. Later they may come out again, but it is a great thing that they should ever have surrendered; for if they come out it is as captives and slaves and they do none of the harm that they might have done before. When the will calls them afresh they respond more quickly, until, after they have entered the soul many times, the Lord is pleased that they should remain there altogether in perfect contemplation.

*Teresa of Ávila, Way of Perfection 28, CWTA2 p.116*

The prayer of recollection, then, is the first indrawing of the soul towards God, the beginning of the interior life, gradually developing into a more interior or supernatural state. It is:



a form of recollection, which also seems to me supernatural, for it does not involve remaining in the dark, or closing the eyes, nor is it dependent upon anything exterior. A person involuntarily closes his eyes and desires solitude; and, without the display of any human skill, there seems gradually to be built for him a temple in which he can make the prayer already described; the senses and all external things seem gradually to lose their hold on him, while the soul, on the other hand, regains its lost control. It is sometimes said that the soul enters within itself, and sometimes that it rises above itself.

*Teresa of Ávila, Interior Castle 4:3, CWTA2 p.240*

Unlike the prayer of quiet that follows, the faculties retain their functioning, and the soul is not required “to abandon meditation and the activities of the understanding”:<sup>4</sup>

God gave us our faculties to work with, and everything will have its due reward; there is no reason, then, for trying to cast a spell over them – they must be allowed to perform their office until God gives them a better one.

*Teresa of Ávila, Interior Castle 4:3, CWTA2 p.243*

When the soul is ready to enter the prayer of quiet, it will automatically be led by God:

When His Majesty wishes the working of the understanding to cease, He employs it in another manner, and illumines the soul’s knowledge to so much higher a degree than any we can ourselves attain that He leads it into a state of absorption, in which, without knowing how, it is much better instructed than it could ever be as a result of its own efforts, which would only spoil everything.

*Teresa of Ávila, Interior Castle 4:3, CWTA2 p.243*

One of the most significant among the Spanish writers to have used St Teresa’s terminology was the Franciscan monk, Juan de los Ángeles (b.1536). He describes the process of recollection in somewhat clearer terms than his adopted mentor:

This prayer is called the prayer of recollection because in it the soul is most readily recollected, and most quickly is taught of God, and most rapidly comes to the enjoyment of quietness. He who, after this manner, can shut himself within the little heaven of his heart, wherein dwells He that created the heavens and the earth, and who accustoms himself neither to look nor to be where his outward senses may be distracted,

let him believe that he is upon the right road and very soon will come to drink of that fountain of life which quenches in us the thirst for all things wherein God dwells not; for this is a profitable road, and like a journey by sea before the wind. Recollection is like a strong castle of the soul, wherein the soul shuts itself that it may not have to fear its enemies, and, recollecting all its senses, withdraws them from outward things.

*Juan de los Ángeles, Conquest 10:10, in NBA1 p.147; cf. in SSM1 pp.305–6*

Among those whose writings are indebted to the mystical works of St Teresa, there is a general understanding that spiritual life progresses from practices such as vocal and mental prayer and discursive meditation, through the first beginnings of interior life in the prayer of recollection, to the suspension of the faculties associated with the prayer of quiet, and culminating in the prayer of union, the spiritual betrothal, and finally the spiritual marriage – the latter three being various degrees of union with God, according to St Teresa’s terminology.

See also: **prayer of quiet, recollection** (8.5).

1. Teresa of Ávila, *Way of Perfection* 28, CWTa2 pp.115–16.
2. Teresa of Ávila, *Interior Castle* 4:3, CWTa2 p.244.
3. Teresa of Ávila, *Way of Perfection* 35, CWTa2 p.151.
4. Teresa of Ávila, *Interior Castle* 4:3, CWTa2 p.243.

**prayer of union** (Sp. *oración de unión*) The state of the soul following on from the prayer of quiet (in which the senses and mental faculties are suspended), in which the soul feels that the will is in union with God; the state of the soul in the fifth mansions, according to the description of St Teresa of Ávila, leading on to the sixth and seventh mansions, in which the soul experiences an ever-increasing degree of union (spiritual betrothal and spiritual marriage). Luis de León explains:

The prayer of union is a suspension of the soul with God, which comes to pass when the soul is at prayer and is reasoning with its understanding. God, applying to the soul His light and His power, draws it to Himself and suspends the reasoning of its understanding, enkindling its will by means of unitive love.

*Luis de León, in Letter from Basilio Ponce de León 43, CWJC3 p.401*

St Teresa adds that both the senses and the understanding are suspended, though – in her experience – this state does not last for very long:

For as long as such a soul is in this state, it can neither see nor hear nor understand: the period is always short and seems to the soul even

shorter than it really is. God implants Himself in the interior of that soul in such a way that, when it returns to itself, it cannot possibly doubt that God has been in it and it has been in God; so firmly does this truth remain within it that, although for years God may never grant it that favour again, it can neither forget it nor doubt that it has received it. This certainty of the soul is very real.

But now you will say to me: how did the soul see it and understand it, if it can neither see nor understand? . . . It sees it clearly afterwards, not because it is a vision, but because of a certainty that remains in the soul, which can be put there only by God. I know of a person who had not learned that God was in all things by presence and power and essence; God granted her a favour of this kind, which convinced her.

*Teresa of Ávila, Interior Castle 5:1; cf. CWT2 p.251*

She also attempts to describe the state of the soul in the prayer of union. The soul is completely asleep to the world. In fact, it is so withdrawn from the body that it cannot even move the limbs:

Here, we are all asleep – and fast asleep – to the things of the world, and to ourselves (in fact, for the short time that the condition lasts, the soul is without consciousness and has no power to think, even though it may desire to do so). There is no need now for it to devise any method of suspending the thought. Even in loving, if it is able to love, it cannot understand how or what it is that it loves, nor what it would desire; in fact, it has completely died to the world so that it may live more fully in God. This is a delectable death, a snatching of the soul from all the activities which it can perform while it is in the body; a death full of delight, for, in order to come closer to God, the soul appears to have withdrawn so far from the body that I do not know if it has still life enough to be able to breathe. . . . Or at least, if it still breathes, it does so without realizing it. The mind would like to occupy itself wholly in understanding something of what it feels and, as it has not the strength to do this, it becomes so dumbfounded that, even if any consciousness remains to it, neither hands nor feet can move; as we commonly say of a person who has fallen into a swoon, it might be taken for dead.

*Teresa of Ávila, Interior Castle 5:1, CWT2 p.248*

In her *Life*, written many years earlier, St Teresa describes the stages of the contemplative life through the analogy of the four ways by which a garden can be watered. These are: drawing buckets from a well by hand and carrying them to the garden; drawing water from a well using buckets on a water wheel turned by a windlass; by means of a stream or irrigation channels, which more effectively saturates the ground; and by heavy rain. Each successive method is more effective, yet requires less effort.<sup>1</sup>

The first water corresponds to the beginner stages of sitting down with the intention of voluntary recollection and of turning the thoughts to God, which leads on to the prayer of recollection.<sup>2</sup> The second water corresponds to the prayer of quiet, in which the senses and faculties are suspended, only the will remaining operative.<sup>3</sup> The third water corresponds to the prayer of union (although she does not use the term in *Life*), which she describes as “definitely union of the entire soul with God”,<sup>4</sup> and “a sleep of the faculties”<sup>5</sup> in which the soul seems to be completely “in a union with God’s will of such a kind that no dissension arises between the wills of God and the soul, but they are both one”.<sup>6</sup> To this she adds:

This seems to me to be nothing less than an all-but-complete death to everything in the world and a fruition of God. . . . It is well (for the soul in this state) . . . to abandon itself wholly into the arms of God. If He is pleased to take it to heaven, let it go; if to hell, it is not distressed, so long as it is going there with its Good. If its life is to come to an end forever, that is its desire; if it is to live a thousand years, that is its desire also. Let His Majesty treat it as His own: it no longer belongs to itself; it is given wholly to the Lord: it can cease to worry altogether.

*Teresa of Ávila, Life 16, 17, CWTA1 pp.96, 101*

See also: **prayer of quiet.**

1. Teresa of Ávila, *Life* 11, *CWTA1* p.65.
2. Teresa of Ávila, *Life* 15, *CWTA1* p.93.
3. Teresa of Ávila, *Life* 14, *CWTA1* p.83ff.
4. Teresa of Ávila, *Life* 17, *CWTA1* p.102.
5. Teresa of Ávila, *Life* 16, *CWTA1* p.96.
6. Teresa of Ávila, *Conceptions* 3, *CWTA2* p.377.

**presence of God** Mystically, awareness of God within one’s own being; a sense of divine immediacy or proximity; awareness of the omnipresence of the Divine; a belief that God sees and hears everything, with or without any actual experience or sense of the divine presence – a thought often used as an incentive to virtuous thought and conduct; also, standing in the presence of God at the time of death, and/or according to eschatological belief, on the Day of Judgment.

All mystics have spoken of the immanent, caring presence of God. As Plotinus says, the Divine is always within reach: “The Good is gentle and friendly and tender, and present with us when we but will.”<sup>1</sup>

The immanent omnipresence of a divine, transcendent Being in all created things is an integral aspect of the philosophy of the Syrian monk (*fl.c.*500 CE) who wrote under the name of Dionysius the Areopagite:

Everything and any part of anything participates in the One, and on the existence of the One everything depends for its existence.

*Pseudo-Dionysius, Divine Names 13:2.977c, in OCM pp.177–78*

Not only is the Divine present in all things, He is the essence of the soul; the soul is “saturated with . . . His presence”:

Our true light and power lie in the hidden source of interior grace in which God springs up ceaselessly within our souls. The soul is saturated with God’s own life, His presence, His activity, His inspiration, His encouragement, and the radiance of His presence.

*Abbé de Tourville, Letters of Direction 16, LDT p.84*

Not only is the Divine present within the soul, He is present in every particle of His creation:

Through the immediacy of His divine majesty and the greatness of His power, the Bridegroom is present, equally without distinction, in every place.

*Bernard of Clairvaux, On the Song of Songs 56.4, WBC3 p.90*

He is present in all creatures and in all places. It is only human weakness that sees Him as present more in one place than another:

God is alike near in all creatures. . . . Whether a man should walk out in the fields and say his prayers, and feel God’s presence, or whether he be in the church and feel God’s presence, does he perceive Him any the better because he is in a place of rest? If he does, it comes from his own infirmity: the difference is not on God’s side, for God is in all things and places alike, and is ever alike ready to give Himself to us, insofar as we are able to receive Him; and he knows God aright who sees Him in all things.

*Johann Tauler, Sermons 2; cf. HLT pp.208–9*

In fact, spiritual life is essentially a matter of an increasing awareness of the Divine, which brings with it true peace. François de Sales writes:

Blessed, indeed, is the man who lovingly preserves the awareness of God’s presence in the stillness of his heart; he will be drawing ever closer to God – imperceptible though it may seem – his whole soul filled with the infinite charm of it.

*François de Sales, Love of God 7:1, LGFS pp.272–73*

Speaking of the love of God that concentrates the soul, drawing it into an awareness of the divine presence, he also says:

Such inward recollection of soul, however, is caused not only by an awareness of God's sacramental presence deep down in the heart, but by anything at all that makes us aware of His presence. Sometimes, all the powers of our souls are concentrated and withdrawn as a result of the deep reverence, the undisturbing fear, that takes hold of us as we reflect on the majesty of the King in whose presence we are, who is looking at us. . . .

The mere presence of God, the mere impression we have that He is looking at us from outside, so to speak, from heaven or anywhere else (even though, for the time being, we have forgotten His presence within us), causes our faculties and powers to concentrate, to recollect themselves, out of reverence for His divine majesty. Love makes us fear Him, but it is love born of honour, of respect.

I knew a soul,<sup>2</sup> as a matter of fact, to whom you had only to say something (in confession or in private conversation) which reminded her of God's presence a little more vividly than usual, and she would go into such a deep state of recollection that she was hard put to it to emerge from it, to speak and answer you. So much so, that she gave the impression of being lifeless, all her senses deadened, until (sooner or later) the Bridegroom allowed her to recover.

*François de Sales, Love of God 6:7; cf. LGFS pp.238–39*

Describing the state of the soul who is “exalted in Him”, whose “gaze is fixed so closely on God that all things are beneath it”, Walter Hilton writes:

The soul is then alone, for it is entirely estranged from the society of those who love the world, although it still remains among them bodily. It has entirely renounced all worldly love of creatures, and is not concerned if it never sees or speaks to a man, or receives comfort from one, so long as it may always continue in the same spiritual state. For it is so deeply conscious of the intimate and blessed presence of God, and so delights in Him, that for His love it can easily forego all love of worldly creatures and even abandon the memory of them. I do not say that it will no longer love or think of other creatures, but rather that it will think of them at the right times, and will regard them and love them with a free and spiritual love, not with an anxious and carnal love as heretofore.

*Walter Hilton, Ladder of Perfection 1:40, LPH p.226*

Even so, he adds, awareness of the Divine presence is not always of the same intensity:

The awareness of special grace that accompanies the invisible presence of God and makes the soul perfect in love does not always continue at its highest intensity, but comes and goes unpredictably. . . . “The Holy Spirit breathes where he wills, and you hear his Voice; but you do not know whence he comes or whither he goes.”<sup>3</sup> Sometimes He comes secretly when you are least aware of Him, but you will recognize Him unmistakably before He goes, for He stirs your heart in a wonderful way, and moves it strongly to contemplate His goodness. Then your heart melts with delight at the tenderness of His love like wax before the fire, and this is the sound of His Voice. Then before you realize it, He departs. He withdraws a little, but not entirely, and the soul passes from ecstasy into tranquillity. The intense awareness of His presence passes away, but the effects of grace remain as long as the soul keeps itself pure, and does not wilfully lapse into carelessness and worldliness, or take refuge in outward things.

*Walter Hilton, Ladder of Perfection 1:41, LPH p.234*

Angela of Foligno similarly describes how her habitual sense of the divine presence sometimes gives way to an experience of even greater profundity:

When the soul feels the presence of God more deeply than is customary, then it knows with certainty that He is within it. It feels it, I say, with an understanding so marvellous and so profound, and with such great love and divine fire, that it loses all love for itself and for the body, and it speaks and knows and understands those things of which it had never heard from any mortal whatsoever.

*Angela of Foligno, Book of Divine Consolation 2:1; cf. BDC p.25*

Experience of the divine presence is not something commanded by scripture or religious doctrine that can be switched on at will. According to Thomas Kelly (1893–1941), its three essential aspects are love, joy, and peace.<sup>4</sup> But primarily, it is a matter of love:

At the centre of divine presence . . . is an inflooding, all-enfolding love, . . . which embraces all creation, not just our little, petty selves.

*Thomas Kelly, Testament of Devotion, TDK p.80*

Life, he says, is generally lived in anxiety about the past or concern for the future. The “now is merely an incidental dividing point”. Yet:

The experience of divine presence changes all this familiar picture. There come times when the presence steals upon us, all unexpected, not the product of agonized effort, and we live in a new dimension of

life... One walks in the world yet above the world as well, giddy with the height, with feather tread, with effortlessness and calm security, meeting the daily routine, yet never losing the sense of presence. Sometimes, these periods are acute and brief, too dazzling to report to anyone. Sometimes, they are less elevated but more prolonged, with a milder sense of glory and of lift, yet as surely of a piece with the more acute experience. Such experiences are emotionless, in themselves, but suffuse all emotion with a background of peace, utter, utter peace and security.

The sense of presence! I have spoken of it as stealing on one unawares. It is recorded of John Wilhelm Rowntree that as he left a great physician's office, where he had just been told that his advancing blindness could not be stayed, he stood by some railings for a few moments to collect himself when he "suddenly felt the love of God wrap him about as though a visible presence enfolded him, and a joy filled him such as he had never known before." ...

In the immediate experience of the presence, the now is no mere nodal point between the past and the future. It is the seat and region of the divine presence itself.

*Thomas Kelly, Testament of Devotion, TDK pp.69–71*

A sense of the divine presence may be overridden by preconceptions concerning the nature of God. St Teresa describes a confusion that arose in her mind from a conflict between her experience of the divine presence and her preconceived beliefs. She also describes how this conflict was resolved:

In the beginning I was ignorant about a certain matter because I didn't know that God was in all things, and though He seemed so present to me, I thought this omnipresence was impossible. (Yet) I couldn't stop believing that He was there since it seemed to me that I understood most clearly that He was there by His very presence. Those who had no learning told me that He was present only by grace. I couldn't believe this, because, as I say, it seemed to me He was present; and so I was troubled. A very learned man from the order of the glorious St Dominic freed me from this doubt, for he told me that God was present, and of how God communicates Himself to us; these truths consoled me tremendously.

*Teresa of Ávila, Life 18:15, CWT1 p.163*

The English poet William Wordsworth writes lyrically of his experience of the divine presence:



And I have felt  
 A presence that disturbs me with the joy  
 Of elevated thoughts: a sense sublime  
 Of something far more deeply interfused,  
 Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,  
 And the round ocean and the living air,  
 And the blue sky, and in the mind of man:  
 A motion and a spirit that impels  
 All thinking things, all objects of all thought,  
 And rolls through all things. Therefore am I still  
 A lover of the meadows and the woods,  
 And mountains; and of all that we behold  
 From this green earth; of all the mighty world  
 Of eye and ear, both what they half create,  
 And what perceive; well pleased to recognize  
 In nature and the language of the sense  
 The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,  
 The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul  
 Of all my moral being.

*William Wordsworth, Tintern Abbey*

See also: **epiphany, presence of God (practice of)** (8.5).

1. Plotinus, *Enneads* 5:5.12; cf. *PA5* pp.192–93, *PEC* p.234.
2. Mother Anne-Marie Rosset, an early Visitation nun and Superior at Bourges.
3. Cf. *John* 3:8.
4. Thomas Kelly, *Testament of Devotion*, *TDK* p.76.

**pú** (C) *Lit.* unpolished gem, uncut jade (*pú*). See **pǔ**.

**pǔ, pú** (C) *Lit.* plain and simple (*pǔ*); unpolished gem, uncut jade (*pú*). In ancient Chinese, *pǔ* could mean ‘plain wood’, and is often translated as ‘uncarved block’. The Chinese pictograms for *pǔ* and *pú* are related – the former having the root ‘wood’, the latter ‘jade’. Both are used metaphorically in Daoism to symbolize original simplicity, plainness, and genuineness – characteristics of the original nature of a human being, which Daoists seek to recover.

*Pǔ* refers to something completely untouched by human hands. A piece of plain uncarved wood (*pǔ*) may be found in nature, whereas a block of wood results from someone having intentionally shaped it into a particular form.

As ‘plain wood’, *pǔ* is used metaphorically for the pristine state of innocence, the original nature of a human being before being ‘sculpted’ by the influences and expectations of existence in the created realms. Each creature and object in the natural world exists within the bounds of its particular natural characteristics. This is referred to as its *dé* (nature, characteristics, virtue). To burn, for example, is the *dé* of fire.

Due to his unique intellect and capacity to discriminate, a human being makes choices that may often take him away from his *dé* – his original inherent nature – and this causes suffering. His original nature may be recovered, however, by coming back into harmony with the *dé* of *Dào*; and Daoism encourages a return to this original state of being. A person who fully embodies his inherent *dé* lives in a state of innocence and simplicity, naturalness and spontaneity, creativity and boundless potential:

When your eternal nature (*chángdé*) does not depart,  
 you will return again to the state of the infant (*yīng’ér*). . . .  
 When your eternal nature is always present,  
 you will return again to the Limitless (*wújí*). . . .  
 When your eternal nature is restored,  
 you will return again to the state of uncarved wood (*pǔ*).

*Dàodé jīng* 28; cf. *LTTC* p.80, *WLT* p.160

This desired state of original simplicity and purity is characterized by disinterested, dispassionate action (*wúwéi*, non-action, unforced and selfless action), by being free from desires, and by having a harmonious disposition. It is a prerequisite of the state of *zìrán* (inherent naturalness) and of returning to the Source (*Dào*). A person in such a state has moved beyond duality:

The eternal (*cháng*) *Dào* is non-acting (*wúwéi*),  
 and yet nothing remains undone.  
 If kings and barons (*i.e.* leaders) lived by it,  
 the ten thousand things (the material realm)  
 would be automatically transformed.

If a transforming desire (*yù*) arises,  
 restrain it by the nameless uncarved wood (*pǔ*).  
 In the nameless uncarved wood (*pǔ*),  
 there is no desire (*wúyù*).  
 Without desire (*bùyù*), there is stillness (*jìng*),  
 and the world is self-ordering (*zìdìng*).

*Dàodé jīng* 37; cf. *TTCC* p.143

Characteristic of the *Dàodé jīng*, the message is as applicable to leaders (“kings and barons”) as to ordinary individuals (‘leaders’ of their own lives). This original state of innocence and simplicity, once retrieved, is expressed in the manner and being of the sages:

Even though there is no way to know or understand (the sage),  
 I shall attempt to describe him simply:  
 Watchful,  
   like someone crossing a winter stream;  
 Vigilant,  
   like someone alert to his surroundings;  
 Restrained,  
   like someone who is away from home;  
 Fluid,  
   like melting ice;  
 Simple,  
   like a block of uncarved wood (*pǔ*);  
 Open,  
   like an empty valley.

*Dàodé jīng* 15

See also: **yīng’ér**, **zìrán**.

**purity** To be unmixed or untainted with anything extraneous, as in ‘pure gold’; morally and spiritually, to be untainted by any material tendencies; the nature of God and the highest state of the soul. When the mind is pure and free from attraction to or disturbance by the physical senses and the things of the world, then the soul – which in its pristine state is naturally pure – is free to ascend to the Divine. See **purity** (►4).

**pútí** (C) *Lit.* wisdom, enlightenment; in Daoism, the wisdom that originates from the *Dào*, and arises automatically in a mind that is pure and still; used in Buddhism to translate the Sanskrit *bodhi* (enlightenment).

The anonymous author of the *Scripture on the Three Pure Subtle Natures* (C18th) – attributing his collection of sayings to master Lǚ Dòngbīn (b.796 CE) says that wisdom is the essence of the *Dào*, and arises naturally when the mind is stilled and purified:

To practise refinement, it is surely necessary to remove passions. It is particularly important to control the mind (*zhìxīn*)... What does

it mean ‘to control the mind (*zhìxīn*)’? The mind is originally pure and still, open and unoccupied; this is the essential character of the mind. To control this mind (*zhì cǐ xīn*) is to let it return to its original state, clear as flowing water, pure without defilement, still as a valley, empty without disturbance, vast as heaven and earth, immeasurable in its reach, open as an immense desert, unfathomably boundless. Such is a mind that is empty of every single thing.

It is like charcoal that glows, like still water that reflects, like a clean mirror that retains no passing images, like the wisdom (*pútí*, S. *bodhi*) that is the root of the *Dào*. Constantly polish the clean mirror, then wisdom (*pútí*) will be continually augmented. Keep the mirror clean and remain inwardly detached, then wisdom (*pútí*) will be impressed upon the mind. When you remain inwardly detached, then (the impressions of) all things will disappear. When the mind becomes like this, then (awareness of) the universal *Dào* will grow.

*Qīngwēi sānpǐn zhēnjīng*, ZW225

See also: **bodhi**.

**qāba qawsayn** (A) *Lit.* two (*qāba*) bows’ length (*qawsayn*); an expression drawn from an account in the *Qur’ān* of Muḥammad’s *mi’rāj* (ascent), in which he is said to have come within “two bows’ length (*qāba qawsayn*) or nearer (*aw adnā*)”<sup>1</sup> of the presence of God. The expressions have been explained by Sufis in a number of ways, in particular as two of the highest stations of the soul in its ascent to God. “*Qāba qawsayn* (two bows’ length)” is called *jam’ al-jam’* (union of union) and is regarded as the station of perfection attained by perfect men, the greatest saints and prophets. *Aw adnā* (“or nearer”) is called *aḥadīyat al-jam’* (unity of all-comprehensiveness) and is generally regarded as the station reserved only for Muḥammad and some of his inheritors.<sup>2</sup>

These two stations on the soul’s ascent were much discussed in the school of Ibn al-‘Arabī.<sup>3</sup> ‘Irāqī, a thirteenth-century Sufi of this school, explains the significance of *qāba qawsayn*:

Imagine lover and Beloved as a single circle divided by a line into two bow-shaped arcs. This line only seems to exist, yet does not, and if it be erased at the moment of their meeting, the circle will appear again as one – as in fact it really is. This then is the secret of “two bows’ length (*qāba qawsayn*)”.

The world but seems to be,  
yet is nothing more than a line  
drawn between light and shadow.

Decipher the message of this dream-script,  
 and learn to distinguish time from eternity.  
 Break the code of this line,  
 and know beyond doubt that all is nothing, nothing.  
 All is He, all is He.

But wait! Even if the line is erased, the circle will still not appear as it did at first. The line's effect will not altogether vanish: it will be gone, but its trace will remain.

*‘Irāqī, Divine Flashes 14, RLRI pp.47–48; cf. DF p.98*

And of the station of “or nearer (*aw adnā*)”, he writes:

The lover sees the Beloved as his own mirror, and himself as the mirror of the Beloved.

Without ceasing,  
 gazing into the purity of the Friend's face,  
 he sees the universe imaged in his own reality;  
 And if he once looks back into the chamber of his heart,  
 he finds there, like a blazing sun,  
 the sweet face of the One who has stolen his heart.

*‘Irāqī, Divine Flashes 6, RLRI p.35; cf. DF p.83*

Ibn al-‘Arabī's disciple, Qūnawī (who possibly gave initiation to ‘Irāqī), makes a distinction between the nature of the two bows. One, he says, is Oneness; the other, manyness.<sup>4</sup> They are the two primary manifestations – the Unseen and the Visible – of the absolute Being. Attainment of the station of the two bows' length still implies some degree of separation of the lover, the Beloved, and ultimate union. “Or nearer” represents the highest degree of spiritual attainment, where no trace of separateness remains.<sup>5</sup> The twentieth-century writer, Farīd Aḥmad Ṣamdī, summarizes:

*Qāba qawsayn* is the stage where the seeker gets merged with Divinity, and he comes to regard the entire creation as Divinity, and Divinity as the entire creation. All other intervening distinctions are considered an illusion (*wahm*). This stage implies nearness to God.

*Aw adnā* (‘or nearer’) is even more sublime. At this stage, the oneness and identity of the seeker with the Divine defy description. Here, distinctions do not even exist as illusion.

*Farīd Aḥmad Ṣamdī, Işılāḥāt-i Şūfiyah, IS p.112*

See also: **jam‘ al-jam‘**.

1. *Qur'ān* 53:9.
2. E.g. 'Irāqī, *Divine Flashes* 14, *DF* pp.98, 137–38, 147.
3. Al-Farghānī, *Mashāriq al-Darārī*, *MD* pp.186, 312–13, 469, 492, 494, 637, 646.
4. Al-Qūnawī, *Tahrīr al-Bayān fī Taqrīr Shu'ab al-Īmān*, *TBT Fātiḥ* 1394, 2630, *Şehid Ali Paşa* 1340, *Halet Ef. Ilavesi* 66.
5. For various Sufi sources, see W.C. Chittick and P.L. Wilson, *Divine Flashes*, *DF* pp.147–49.

**qabḍ** (A/P) *Lit.* to be grasped or gripped (by the hand); thus, contraction, constriction, spasm, compression; also, seizure, possession, constipation; mystically, the contraction of the heart when it is veiled from the inner reality; a state in which divine inspiration appears to have ceased, and the seeker derives no pleasure from spiritual practice; the converse of *baṣṭ* (expansion), which is the exhilaration and joy of an expanded consciousness. *Qabḍ* and *baṣṭ* are the alternating poles, the spiritual ups and downs, of a seeker's life. Sometimes the heart expands and feels drawn to God; at other times it contracts, and divine inspiration seems far away.

The terms originate in the *Qur'ān*, “It is God that gives you want (*qabḍ*) and plenty (*baṣṭ*),”<sup>1</sup> or, as another translation has it, “It is God who lessens and increases.”<sup>2</sup> In the context, the verse means that God determines whether or not a person will have sufficient for their needs. The spiritual interpretation of *qabḍ* and *baṣṭ* is more clearly expressed in:

If God wishes to guide a man,  
He opens (*yashrah*) his breast to *islām* (surrender);  
And whoever He wishes to lead astray,  
he makes his breast narrow, tight (*ḍayyiqan*),  
as if he were engaged in a sheer ascent.

*Qur'ān* 6:125; cf. AYA, KPA, MGK

A *ḥadīth* also says, “The true believer's heart is between the two fingers of the merciful God.”<sup>3</sup> These “two fingers” are *Jalāl* (God in his terrible aspect of majesty and power) and *Jamāl* (God in His loving and merciful aspect). When God reveals the “finger” of *Jalāl*, the mystic's heart contracts with sadness (*qabḍ*); when He reveals his “finger” of *Jamāl*, the mystic's heart expands with joy (*baṣṭ*).

Both conditions are considered to arise from God and to be necessary for spiritual evolution and mystic self-effacement (*maḥw*). Constriction humbles the mind, making it realize that nothing is possible without divine grace, making it long for joy. Expansion brings inspiration and encouragement to continue. In fact, grace is never withdrawn. Although clouds may obscure the sun for a while, the sun never disappears. There is a divine purpose to this ebb and flow. Ibn 'Aṭā' Illāh says:

He expanded you so as not to keep you in contraction (*qabḍ*);  
 He contracted you so as not to keep you in expansion (*bast*);  
 And He took you out of both,  
 so that you may not belong to anything apart from Him.

It is more dreadful for gnostics  
 to be expanded than to be contracted;  
 For only a few can stay  
 within the limits of proper conduct in expansion (*bast*).

Through the existence of joy  
 the soul gets its share in expansion (*bast*);  
 But there is no share for the soul in contraction (*qabḍ*).

Sometimes He gives while depriving you,  
 and sometimes He deprives you in giving.  
 When He opens up your understanding of deprivation,  
 deprivation becomes the same as giving. . . .

When He gives, He shows you His kindness (*birr*);  
 When He deprives, He shows you His power (*qahr*);  
 And in all that, He is making Himself known to you,  
 and coming to you with His gentleness.

Deprivation hurts you  
 only because of your incomprehension of God in it.

Sometimes He opens the door of obedience for you,  
 but not the door of acceptance;  
 Or sometimes He condemns you to sin,  
 and it turns out to be a cause for union with God.

A disobedience that bequeaths humiliation and extreme need  
 is better than an obedience that bequeaths self-infatuation and pride.

*Ibn 'Aṭā' Illāh, Kitāb al-Ḥikam 9:80–84, 10:93–96,*

*HAAI pp.60, 62, BWIC pp.68, 70–71*

Rūmī also points out in a number of places that, on the path to God, a seeker experiences contraction as well as expansion. When spiritual practice is neglected, there is contraction, which can lead to spiritual blindness after death:

When you commit wrong, He sends chastisement,  
 to the end that you may turn from imperfection to perfection.

When you have neglected a part of your spiritual practices on the Way,  
 there comes over you a painful and hot feeling of contraction (*qabḍ*).  
 That is the corrective act (of God) meaning,  
 “Make no change to the ancient covenant,  
 lest this contraction (*qabḍ*) become a chain,  
 and this that presently grips the heart  
 shall become a fetter gripping the foot.” ...  
 See therefore that you do not regard this sign as of no account.  
 The contractions (*qabḍ ḥā*) arising from sins affect only the heart:  
 after death these contractions (*qabḍ ḥā*) become chains.  
 “Whosoever in this world shall turn his back upon Our remembrance,  
 We shall give him a constricted life hereafter,  
 and reward him with (spiritual) blindness.”<sup>4</sup>

*Rūmī, Maṣnavī III:348–54; cf. MJR4 pp.22–23*

Bad deeds and bad thoughts also result in contraction, observes Rūmī, and it is best to strike at the root of bad thoughts before they become established in the mind and turn into actions:

When a thief is carrying off the property of others,  
 contraction (*qabḍ*) and constriction of heart prick his conscience.  
 When he says, “I wonder what this contraction (*qabḍ*) is”:  
 say, “It is the contraction (*qabḍ*) (distress) of the injured person  
 who wept at your wickedness.”  
 When he pays no regard to this contraction (*qabḍ*),  
 the wind of perseverance in evil fans the fire of evil.  
 The contraction (*qabḍ*) that grips the heart  
 turns into the grip of the policeman:  
 Inevitably those thoughts become manifest and express themselves.  
 Then the pangs become prison and crucifixion:  
 for the pang is as the root, and the root produces boughs.

The root was hidden, it has been revealed:  
 regard your inward contraction (*qabḍ*) and expansion (*baṣṭ*) as a root.  
 When it is a bad root, smite it quickly,  
 so that the ugly thorn may not grow in the garden.  
 If you have felt contraction (*qabḍ*):  
 seek a remedy for it, because all branches grow from the root.  
 If you have felt expansion (*baṣṭ*):  
 water your expansion (*baṣṭ*), and when the fruit appears,  
 give it to your friends.

*Rūmī, Maṣnavī III:355–64; cf. MJR4 p.23*



On the other hand, like Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Illāh, Rūmī points out that the apparent ebb and flow of divine inspiration has a purpose:

When a feeling of contraction (*qabḍ*) comes over you, O traveller,  
it is for your good: do not become afire with grief in your heart;  
For in expansion (*bast*) and delight you are spending:  
and expenditure requires an income to balance it.

If it were always the season of summer,  
the blazing heat of the sun would permeate the garden  
and burn up from root and bottom, the soil whence its plants grow,  
so that the withered plants would never again become fresh.  
If December is sour-faced, yet it is kind;  
Summer may be laughing, but it burns.  
When contraction (*qabḍ*) comes, behold expansion (*bast*) therein:  
be cheerful and do not let wrinkles form upon your brow. . .

Sorrow (*gham*) is as a mirror before the struggler,  
for in this contrary there appears the face of its opposite.  
After the contrary that is pain,  
the other contrary, that is gladness and triumph, shows its face.  
Observe these two qualities (contraction and expansion)  
in the fingers of your hand:  
Assuredly after the closing of the fist comes the opening.  
If the fingers are always closed or invariably open,  
their owner is like an afflicted person.  
His ability to work and act requires these two qualities:  
these two conditions are as important for him as wings to a bird.

*Rūmī, Maṣnavī III:3734–39, 3762–66; cf. MJR4 pp.209, 211*

He also likens *qabḍ* to the state of a seed which must merge with sombre earth before it can sprout and expand:

A kernelly seed (*dānah-’i pur maghz*) graciously consorted  
in solitary intercourse with the gloomy earth;  
It effaced itself (*maḥw kard*) entirely in the earth,  
so that no colour or scent or red or yellow hue remained to it.  
After that effacement (*maḥw*), its constriction (*qabḍ*) ceased:  
it opened and spread (*bast*), and went on its way.  
When it lost itself in the presence of its origin,  
its form departed, and its real essence was revealed.

*Rūmī, Maṣnavī III:2067–70; cf. MJR4 p.115*

Some Sufis have tried to distinguish two forms of *qabḍ*. *Al-qabḍ al-Maḥmūd* (contraction of the Praised) arises from the grace and will of God or the master in order to prevent spiritual pride. *Al-qabḍ al-madhīm* (contraction of the blamed ones) follows the commission of some mistake, often arising from a sense of guilt or fear, which may make it seem like a divine punishment or discipline to the seeker. In fact, no clear distinction can be made between the two.

See also: **baṣṭ**.

1. *Qur'ān* 2:245; cf. *AYA*.
2. *Qur'ān* 2:245, *QAL*.
3. *Ḥadīth*, *AMBF* 13.
4. Cf. *Qur'ān* 20:124.

**qāl** (A/P) *Lit.* saying, speech, discourse; thus, words; from *qāla* (to speak); hence, the Sufi saying that mysticism is a matter of *ḥāl* not *qāl* (mystical experience or feeling, not words), *ḥāl* in Sufi terminology being a mystical state and the revealed knowledge that goes with it.

Hujwīrī applies the saying to divine love:

The explanation of love is not love, because love is a feeling (*ḥāl*), and feelings are never mere words (*qāl*). If the whole world wished to attract love, they could not; and if they made the utmost efforts to repel it, they could not. Love is a divine gift, not something that can be acquired.

‘Amr ibn ‘Uthmān al-Makkī, *Kitāb-i Maḥabbat*,  
in *Kashf al-Maḥjūb* XIX, *KMM* p.400; cf. *KM* pp.309–10

Aḥmad al-Aflākī provides a practical example when describing an incident in which Shaykh Shihāb al-Dīn Suhrawardī visits Sayyid Burhān al-Dīn while on a visit to Baghdad:

When the *shaykh* went in to see Sayyid, he observed that Sayyid was sitting on the ground and that he remained motionless. The *shaykh* lowered his head and sat down at a distance. No talk of any kind was exchanged between them. Then, weeping, the *shaykh* stood up and departed. The disciples said: “Why is it there was not a single question or answer or any speech between you?”

The *shaykh* replied: “Before the people of states (*ahl-i ḥāl*) what is required is the language of states (*zabān-i ḥāl*), not the language of words (*zabān-i qāl*).”

Listening in silence is to your advantage before the visionary.  
 For this reason the words came down: “Be silent!”<sup>1</sup>  
 Go on now, be silent by way of showing obedience  
 in the shade of the *shaykh* and the master’s command.

Indeed, without this spiritual state (*hāl*), simply through words (*qāl*) alone, difficulties are not solved straight away.

*Aḥmad al-Aflākī, Manāqib al-ʿArīfīn* 2:24, *MASA* 1 p.72; cf. *FKG* p.53

1. *Qurʾān* 46:29.

**qīfǎn** (C) *Lit.* seven (*qī*) + to return to (*fǎn*); seven returns, seven reversions, sevenfold reversion; complete reversion; part of a family of metaphorical terms used in the Daoist *nèidān* (inner alchemy) tradition.

In Daoism, the number seven is the *yáng* number for fire and symbolizes completion, wholeness, or perfection. Hence ‘sevenfold reversion’ implies ‘completion of the reversion process’. According to master Xiāo Tíngzhī (C13th) in his *Anthology on the Great Achievement of the Golden Elixir*, some say that wood (symbolized by three) and metal (symbolized by four) when merged and completed result in seven, representing the ‘seven reversions’ in the *nèidān* process of refinement or purification of *jīng-qì-shén* (vital essence, life energy, spirit).<sup>1</sup> *Qīfǎn* is comparable in meaning to *jiǔhuán* (nine restorations). See **jiǔhuán**.

1. See Xiāo Tíngzhī, *Jīndān dàchéng jí*, in *Xiūzhēn shíshū*, *DZ*263 13:9b–10a; cf. in *CPMS* p.314 (n.112).

**qīngjìng** (C) *Lit.* pure, clean, clear, fresh, cool, quiet, or peaceful (*qīng*) + still, motionless, silent, quiet, peaceful, calm, or tranquil (*jìng*); clarity, purity, or quietness (*qīng*) + stillness, calmness, quiescence, or tranquillity (*jìng*). In Chinese characters, there are two ways of writing *qīngjìng*; one means ‘clarity and stillness’ and the other ‘clarity and purity’. Both are used interchangeably in Daoist texts, but in Chinese Buddhism it is the latter version that is used. This version also appears in Chinese translations of Buddhist texts, where it translates the Sanskrit *parishuddhi* (complete purification) or the Pali *visuddhi* (purity) – a concept that was later developed into the *Mahāyāna* notion of the ‘innately pure mind’. *Qīngjìng* is thus rendered by a variety of similar expressions. These include: clarity and stillness, purity and quiescence, clarity and purity, calm and quiet, and so on.

The two earliest (c.C3rd BCE) Daoist texts, the *Dàodé jīng* and the *Zhuāngzǐ*, both speak of *qīngjìng*. The *Dàodé jīng* says that to be “calm and quiet” is the ideal way to go through life:

Being calm and quiet (*qīngjìng*) is the correct rule of conduct in the world.

*Dàodé jīng* 45

The unknown author of the *Xiǎng'ěr* commentary (C2nd) to the *Dàodé jīng* says:

Daoists (*dàorén*) should value their essence and spirit. Clarity and stillness (*qīngjìng*) are the basis. . . . The *Dào* is ever without desire. It delights in clarity and stillness (*qīngjìng*).

*Lǎozǐ xiǎng'ěr zhù*, S6825, EDSB pp.121, 143

The *Dàodé jīng* also applies the metaphor of muddy water to the cluttered human mind, describing how such a turbid mind may be cleared:

Let it be still (*jìng*), and it will gradually become clear (*qīng*).

*Dàodé jīng* 15, TT1 p.58

The *Zhuāngzǐ* compares man's indwelling spirit to water, which naturally returns to clarity and purity if it is not stirred. According to the author, to follow the example of water is the way to care for the spirit and unite it with the *Dào*:

It is the nature of water that, if unmixed with other things, it is clear (*qīng*); and if nothing stirs it, it is level. But if it is dammed and hemmed in and not allowed to flow, then it ceases to be clear (*qīng*). As such, it is a symbol of heavenly virtue (*dé*). So it is said that the way to care for the spirit (*shén*) is: to be pure (*chún*), clean, and mixed with nothing; still (*jìng*), unified, and unchanging; limpid and unstirring; and moving with the ways of heaven.

*Zhuāngzǐ* 15; cf. CTW p.169

Silencing and quietening the mind and senses brings inner clarity; then spirit takes command of the body, ensuring long life. In a fable from the *Zhuāngzǐ*, the legendary sage-ruler Huángdì ('Yellow Emperor'), said to have ruled during the third millennium BCE, receives instruction from Guǎngchéngzǐ ('Master of Wide Achievement'):

You must be still (*jìng*); you must be pure (*qīng*); not subjecting your body to toil, not agitating your vital essence (*jīng*) – then you may live long. When your eyes see nothing, your ears hear nothing, and your mind knows nothing, then your spirit will maintain your body, and the body will live long. Pay attention to what is within you, and close the avenues that connect you to what is without.

*Zhuāngzǐ* 11; cf. TT1 pp.298–99

The need for stillness of mind and spirit is echoed in the *Qīngjìng jīng* ('Scripture on Purity and Stillness'), a monastic liturgy of the *Quánzhēn* school of Daoism that demonstrates a Buddhist influence. Dating from the *Táng* dynasty (618–907) and still in use today, the text emphasizes the need for and the benefit of purity and stillness. However, when desires arise, the mind is distracted from its natural inclination towards stillness, and the mind diverts the spirit from its natural inclination towards purity:

The human spirit (*shén*) tends towards purity (*qīng*),  
but the mind (*xīn*) disturbs it.

The human mind (*xīn*) tends towards stillness (*jìng*),  
but desires (*yù*) draw it away.

*Qīngjìng jīng, DZ620 1b*

Therefore, keeping the mind pure and free from desires permits its own natural and innate state to emerge:

If you can banish desires (*yù*) for good,  
then the mind (*xīn*) will automatically be still (*jìng*).

If you can cleanse the mind (*xīn*) for good,  
then the spirit (*shén*) will automatically be clear (*qīng*).

*Qīngjìng jīng, DZ620 1b*

If one can pass through life in this ever-changing world with an unchanging attitude of disinterested or selfless action (*wúwéi*, non-action), then the original nature of the true self will become apparent. With such an approach to life, realization of the *Dào* becomes possible:

When stillness is absolute –  
how can desires (*yù*) arise?

When no desires arise –  
that is true stillness (*jìng*).

In true constancy (*cháng*), attend to things.

In true constancy, your (original) nature is realized.

To remain constant while attending to things  
is to be constantly still (*jìng*),  
in constant clarity and stillness (*qīngjìng*).

In such clarity and stillness (*qīngjìng*),  
gradually enter the true path to *Dào*.

When the true *Dào* is entered,  
it is called realization of *Dào*.

The *Dào* of true permanence  
 will come naturally to those who are awakened.  
 To attain realization of *Dào*  
 is to be constantly clear and still (*qīngjìng*).

*Qīngjìng jīng*, DZ620 1b–2a

Other Daoist texts and teachers repeat the same message. According to the fifth-century *Xīshēng jīng* ('Scripture on Western Ascension'), to maintain clarity and purity while adapting to the changing events of life, all desires relating to the transient personal self must be surrendered:

Reject all that self-will might desire (*yù*),  
 and you will naturally guard clarity and purity (*qīngjìng*).

*Xīshēng jīng* 12, DZ266, JY84, in DZ726 3:12a, TMPS p.244

And:

If you can be constantly pure and tranquil (*qīngjìng*),  
 and let things take their own course (*wúwéi*),  
*qì* (subtle life energy) will revert to its natural state.

*Xīshēng jīng* 20, DZ266, JY84, in DZ726 4:12a

Echoing both the *Xīshēng jīng* and the *Qīngjìng jīng*, the seventh-century *Nèiguān jīng* ('Scripture on Inner Contemplation') discusses *guān* (contemplation) – a Daoist adaptation of Buddhist meditation – and the experience of inner light:

For someone who is able to keep the mind always pure and still (*qīngjìng*), the *Dào* will automatically come to stay. When the *Dào* automatically comes to stay, spiritual light (*shénmíng*) will suffuse the entire self. When spiritual light (*shénmíng*) suffuses the self, (spiritual) life (*shēng*) will not perish.

*Nèiguān jīng*, DZ641 5a; cf. TMLT p.215

Shuǐjīngzǐ (aka. Zhào Yīmíng, fl.C16th) says that "those who cultivate *Dào* regard purity and stillness (*qīngjìng*) as supreme,"<sup>1</sup> and he provides a formula for establishing this foundation:

Do not see that which is not virtuous,  
 and your eyes will be pure and still (*qīngjìng*).  
 Do not say that which is not virtuous,  
 and your mouth will be pure and still (*qīngjìng*).

Do not do that which is not virtuous,  
and your heart will be pure and still (*qīngjìng*).  
*Shuījīngzǐ, Qīngjìng jīng (5) túzhù, CSTM p.29*

The *Scripture for Daily Internal Practice* (c.C10th–13th), a short Daoist text of unknown provenance, focuses on self-cultivation and meditation. Despite its brevity, the author considers *qīngjìng* to be of such significance that he twice advises:

Throughout the twenty-four hours of the day,  
constantly seek purity and stillness (*qīngjìng*).  
*Nèi rìyòng jīng, DZ645 1b, HDP6 p.19*

Master Liú Yīmíng (1734–1821) advises that success in spiritual work depends upon emptying the mind of all unnecessary thoughts and minimizing attachment, until one naturally reaches the point of purity and stillness, and acts in an entirely selfless manner (*wúwéi*):

Those who fail to understand the *Dào* and fail to attain the *Dào* do so because of the movement of the mind and an unstable foundation. If you see that all things are empty, then ascend beyond all things – continually reduce (mental activity) until non-action (*wúwéi*) and a pure and still (*qīngjìng*) mind (*fāngcùn*) have been attained; then the inside work has been done.

If, in addition, you accumulate virtue and cultivate good deeds, endure hardship and benefit others, adapt to every situation – uncorrupted by wealth or honour, unaffected by destitution or lowliness, unyielding to dominance or force, walking on the earth with an annihilated mind – if you live life as circumstances dictate, eliminating all afflictions, then the outside work has been done.

*Liú Yīmíng, Wùzhēn zhízhǐ, ZW253, DS17*

Overall, the qualities most emphasized in Daoist spiritual life, outer and inner, are clarity or purity (*qīng*) and tranquillity or stillness (*jìng*). The ancient *Book of Master Wén* (c.200 BCE) states that clarity and purity (*qīngjìng*) are inherent qualities of adepts (*zhēnrén*, real people) or “true human beings” – of those who are imbued with *Dào*:

The nature of true human beings (*zhēnrén*) is to be merged with the *Dào*. Then they are nonexistent, but appear to exist. They are empty, but appear (outwardly) real. They control from the inside, not from the outside. Their light is bright and ultimately pure.

They are non-acting (*wúwéi*) and have returned to their original nature (*pǔ*). . . .

They know without learning, see without looking, accomplish without doing, control without managing. They respond when prompted, act when pressed, move when they have to. Like the radiance of a light and the casting of a shadow, they take their cue from the *Dào*. They are open and empty, clear and still (*qīngjìng*).

*Wénzi* 3, DZ746

Master Wáng Zhé (C12th) says that he derives physical as well as spiritual benefit from remaining grounded in *qīngjìng*. Here, “red mist and yellow-green fog” evoke images of inner experiences:

When I thoroughly nurture my spirit and *qì* (subtle life energy),  
 automatically, I no longer feel cold, hunger, or sleep.  
 I attain the state of carefree wandering –  
 the ground of clarity and purity (*qīngjìng*).  
 I enjoy true serenity,  
 and enter into the red mist and yellow-green fog.

*Wáng Zhé, Chóngyáng quánzhēn jí, DZ1153 4:6a; cf. in TPEQ p.39*

In his early days of mastership, Wáng Zhé wrote a brief poem to the householder Mǎ Yù. Along with the poem, the master also included a drawing of a skeleton to remind Mǎ Yù of his mortality. This appears to have been a common practice among the masters of the *Quánzhēn* school of Daoism as a message concerning the shortness of human life. Human existence, says Wáng Zhé in his poem, is characterized by “torrents of dusty labour”, *chén* (dust) being a common Daoist metaphor for the world or materiality. He also uses the image of snatching a pearl (a metaphor for spirituality) from under the nose of a “black dragon”, an image that comes from a story in the *Zhuāngzǐ*<sup>2</sup> (c.C3rd BCE). Part of his poem reads:

When you are a human being,  
 be aware of the torrents of dusty labour.  
 The true mind of purity and clarity (*qīngjìng*) is your true treasure.  
 Seize the pearl from the mouth of the black dragon –  
 and run into the cavern of Kūnlún (immortality).

*Wáng Zhé, Chóngyáng quánzhēn jí, DZ1153 10:14b; cf. in TPEQ p.167*

It is said that soon after receiving this message, Mǎ Yù gave up his worldly life to become a disciple of master Wáng Zhé.

After having attained the *Dào* himself, master Mǎ Yù (*aka.* Dānyáng) later advised his own disciples on various aspects of daily living while



cultivating the *Dào*. Among the qualities he advocates are purity and stillness (*qīngjìng*):

Scorn tastes (eat plainly) in order to cultivate energy (*yǎngqì*). Rid yourself of anger in order to cultivate your (original) nature (*yǎngxìng*). Be humble in order to cultivate your *dé* (virtue, *yǎngdé*). In order to cultivate the *Dào*, be present with the One (*shǒuyī*), be pure (*qīng*) and still (*jìng*), be calm and serene (*tiándàn*). Your name need no longer be in the (karmic) account book. Detach your mind from power and profit (*shìlì*). As a result, you will shed the human shell and become a devotee of heaven.

*Mǎ Yù, Dānyáng zhēnrén yǔlù, DZ1057 2b*

Elsewhere, master Mǎ Yù lists the main criteria for becoming a *dàorén* (person of the *Dào*), among which are again purity and stillness (*qīngjìng*):

Now, as for cultivation of the *Dào*, it consists simply of the following:

Be pure (*qīng*), be still (*jìng*): then you will live in the way of the Unconditioned (*wúwéi*).

Eliminate (*xiāo*) your self-existence: then you will be lifted afar with such ease (*yáo*) (as to dissolve into the Void).

Be natural (*zì*), be present (*zài*): then you will be free from defilement (*bùrǎn*) and attachment (*bùzhuó*).

*Mǎ Yù, Dānyáng zhēnrén yǔlù, DZ1057 4b*

If you are able thoroughly to chew and savour these twelve (Chinese) characters (in the foregoing list), you will be a person of the *Dào* (*dàorén*) who has fathomed the depths. Just believe this old man's words. If you practise this, you shall certainly benefit. I am definitely not misleading you young people (by saying this).

*Mǎ Yù, Dānyáng zhēnrén yǔlù, DZ1057 4b, in TPEQ p.24*

He also maintains that among these criteria, mastering the *qīngjìng* of the *Dào* is the greatest achievement. Here, “vital essence (*jīng*)” and “life energy (*qì*)” are the two fundamental body energies:

Master (Wáng Zhé) says that if people can recognize the purity and stillness (*qīngjìng*) of the *Dào*, this is ultimate perfection and wholeness. So the scripture says, “When human beings are constantly pure and still (*qīngjìng*), then heaven and earth return (home).”<sup>3</sup>

“Heaven and earth” here do not refer to the outer sky and ground; they refer to heaven and earth within the human body. Within the human body, above the diaphragm is heaven, below the diaphragm

is earth. When the energy of heaven descends and the channels of earth are open and unobstructed, above and below mingle and merge. In this way, vital essence (*jīng*) and life energy (*qì*) are automatically stabilized.

*Mǎ Yù, Dānyáng zhēnrén yǔlù, DZ1057 6a*

Master Mǎ Yù is saying that becoming pure and serene leads to the purification of *jīng* and *qì*. This constitutes the first stage in *nèidān* (inner alchemy). Living a simple life with few acquisitions is important, he adds – in fact, he considers it a prerequisite, because simplicity and contentment are essential to quieten and purify the mind:

A person of the *Dào* (*dàorén*) must not dislike being poor. Poverty is the foundation of nurturing life. If hungry, eat a bowl of rice gruel; if sleepy, spread out a grass mat. Pass the days and nights in tattered garments. Such is truly the lifestyle of a person of the *Dào* (*dàorén*). In this way, you will come to understand that the single matter of purity and clarity (*qīngjìng*) cannot be acquired by the wealthy.

*Mǎ Yù, Dānyáng zhēnrén yǔlù, DZ1057 10b–11a; cf. in TPEQ pp.40–41*

The present-day master Ni Hua-Ching agrees that in order to aid the spirit in its quest for reunion with *Dào*, cleansing and purifying the mind should be the primary concern:

To cultivate *Dào*, to become a *xiān* (an immortal, one who has realized the immortality of the spirit), it is first necessary to recover one's true nature by recovering one's virtues, in the sense of collecting power. Virtue means true gain in life. By realizing virtue, one reunites with the *Dào*. In order to restore virtue, one must restore the purity and clarity (*i.e.* *qīngjìng*) of one's mind. Daoist purity and clarity means the normal energy of an original undistorted true being.

*Ni Hua-Ching, Taoist Inner View, TIVU p.50*

1. Shuǐjīngzǐ, *Qīngjìng jīng* (5) túzhù, ZW77, CSTM p.29.
2. Zhuāngzǐ 12.
3. *Qīngjìng jīng* 5, DZ620 1b, JY262 2:5b.

**qiyās** (A/P) *Lit.* imagination, thought, conjecture, estimation, supposition, opinion, analogy, calculation; thus, analogical reasoning, deduction by recourse to analogy or comparison with a similar situation; the mental process by which judgments are made and by which understandings based on the scriptures are reached.

In *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence concerning rules and laws that cannot be specifically found in the *Sunnah*), *qiyās* is accepted by the majority of *Sunnīs* as one of the four roots or sources of the law. It is a means by which Muslim religious scholars form verdicts and judgments based upon the *Qur'ān* and the *Sunnah*. The *Sunnah* consists of the teachings and example of the Prophet as derived from the *ḥadīth*, which are comprised of the sayings, deeds and conduct traditionally ascribed to the Prophet. Many great *faqīhs* (scholars of Islamic law), particularly among the *Shī'ah* and the *Zāhirīyah*, rejected *qiyās*. Others, such as Ibn Ḥanbal, accepted it only reluctantly, or as a last resort.

In any event, *qiyās* is contrasted with *naṣṣ*, a primary authoritative instruction given in the *Qur'ān* or the *Sunnah*. *Qiyās*, as analogical deduction, may be used only when no direct prescription (*naṣṣ*) can be found in the *Qur'ān* or *Sunnah*.

In mystical writings, *qiyās* implies an intellectually sound, but nonetheless false analogy. Essentially, it is the equivalent of *ẓann* (conjecture, opinion). It was *qiyās* when *Iblīs* refused to bow to Adam because Adam was made of clay while he was made of fire.<sup>1</sup> The inferences of *qiyās*, even if perfectly logical, are the workings of 'carnal reason', the intellect ('*aql*') under the sway of the *nafs* (lower mind).

See also: **naṣṣ** (8.4).

1. *Qur'ān* 7:11ff.

**quán** (C) *Lit.* completion, wholeness; complete, whole, entire, full; in Daoism, the state of wholeness or completeness that arises from union with *Dào*; also, a stage along the way to such union; the recovery of or return to the experience of one's true self or original nature; also, the essential wholeness of all things as a part of the all-pervading *Dào*.

The present-day Daoist author Deng Ming-Dao points out that Daoism emphasizes the undifferentiated wholeness (*quán*) of all things rather than the individual parts:

The art of following *Dào* is all about the study of wholeness and harmony. The emphasis is on the greatness of life, not the smallness of parts. Life is viewed not as a concert of parts, but as the grand movement of the whole. . . . Just as we breathe, all of life breathes. To follow *Dào* means to breathe in concert with it.

*Deng Ming-Dao, Everyday Tao, ETBH p.14*

The ideal state of wholeness (*quán*) is often represented metaphorically in Daoist texts as the pure unadulterated state of the newborn child.<sup>1</sup> The image

evokes the fundamental wholeness of a human being before the shaping and conditioning of external influences.

Wholeness characterizes the primal condition before *Dào* projects itself into what became the creation. In order to return to this original wholeness, Daoists are advised to relinquish the sense of duality and the perception of distinction between things, and to see everything as one whole:

Therefore, whether a grass stalk or a pillar, a leper or the beautiful Xīshī, great or small, grotesque or strange – the one *Dào* universally pervades them all. When things are separate and differentiated, they take on form. When things take on form, their all-pervasiveness is lost. (In reality), nothing has either form or no form – all are a part of the all-pervading One. Only those who have reached beyond understand the universal pervasiveness of the One. They take things as they are and do not differentiate; they entrust themselves to the universal (*yōng*). They turn towards (spiritual) accomplishment and draw near to the *Dào*. They are naturally accomplished, with no mind to differentiate between things. This is called the *Dào*.

*Zhuāngzǐ* 2

Wholeness (*quán*) also means remaining undisturbed by circumstances. It is the state of *zìrán* (spontaneous naturalness) that flows with events in the spirit of *wúwéi* (non-action, unforced and selfless action), not forcing a particular thing to happen or not to happen:

Bend and you will be whole (*quán*).  
 Curl and you will be straight.  
 Remain empty and you will be filled.  
 Grow old and you will be renewed.  
 Have little and you will gain.  
 Have much and you will be confused.  
 In this way, the sage embraces the One (*bàoyī*),  
 and becomes an exemplar for all under heaven. . . .

Truly, the ancient saying: “Bend and you will remain whole (*quán*)” is no idle word. Nay, if you have really attained wholeness (*quán*), everything will flock to you.

*Dàodé jīng* 22; cf. *TTCW* p.45, *WLT* p.134

“Bend and you will be whole” evokes the sapling that naturally weathers a storm if pliant and flexible, but is broken by the wind if fixed and unbending. In the same way, by remaining pliant and flexible, a Daoist will “remain whole (*quán*)”.

Of all human beings, only an enlightened sage is complete or whole in all respects. The *Zhuāngzǐ* (c. C3rd BCE) describes such a sage as perfect in virtue and purity, and free of thoughts and schemes. Holding fast to the *Dào*, he walks shoulder to shoulder with other human beings:

He who holds fast to the *Dào* is complete (*quán*) in its virtues; being complete (*quán*) in its virtues, he is complete (*quán*) in his (human) embodiment; being complete (*quán*) in embodiment, he is complete (*quán*) in his spirit; and to be complete (*quán*) in spirit (*shén*) is the way of the sage. He lives life walking side by side with people, never minding what they do. Vast and deep, his wholeness (*quán*) is pure and absolute.

*Zhuāngzǐ* 12

According to Chángquánzǐ (C13th) in his *Scripture on the Cavernous Antiquity in Red Script*, the sage has developed his inner life by withdrawing his attention from the physical senses. This leads to spiritual wholeness:

Turning away from the sense of sight,  
the light becomes infinitely effulgent;  
Cutting off the sense of hearing,  
the mind becomes concentrated in the eternal depths.

Turning away from these two organs of perception,  
a man will be able to shut himself away  
from the allurements of the world.  
Pure, guileless, complete (*quán*),  
in perfect harmony with the vast and limitless universe,  
enveloped in a life-giving ambience,  
he is subject to no human limitations.

*Chìwén dònggǔ jīng*, DZ106 32b, JY58; cf. TTEP p.69

See also: yī (►1).

1. E.g. *Zhuāngzǐ* 23; *Dàodé jīng* 55.

**quietude** A state or condition of calmness, quietness, peace, or tranquillity; outwardly, a way of life that seeks to avoid external distractions; inwardly, a state of contemplation in which the mind is still; a state of inner tranquillity and mental concentration arising from and deepened by the practice of interior prayer and watchfulness over the mind and heart; an attitude of silent opening to the Divine; “death to all things of the world” and “the sepulchre of the contemplative soul”.<sup>1</sup>

Quietude or stillness (Gk. *hēsychia*) is one of the primary aims of the Jesus prayer, as practised within the Orthodox Church. Hēsychios the Priest describes the fruits of this form of contemplation as a state “in which the intellect, free from all images, enjoys complete quietude”.<sup>2</sup>

Speaking of the practice of what she calls the “prayer of quiet”, St Teresa describes it as a state of inner recollection and focus:

This quietude and recollection is something that is clearly felt in the soul through the satisfaction and peace it brings, together with a very great joy and repose of the faculties, and a most sweet delight. It seems to the soul, since it has gone no further, that there is nothing left for it to desire, and . . . it wishes it could make its abode here. It dares not move or stir, for it seems that if it did this blessing would slip from its grasp: sometimes it would like even to cease from breathing.

*Teresa of Ávila, Life 15:1; cf. CWT1 p.139, CWT1 p.88*

In fact, she says, such quietude arises from the practice of interior recollection, rather than from practices in which the mind is active:

From this recollection there sometimes springs an interior peace and quietude which is full of happiness; for the soul is in such a state that it thinks there is nothing that it lacks. Even speaking – by which I mean vocal prayer and meditation – wearies it: it would like to do nothing but love. This condition lasts for some time, and may even last for long periods.

*Teresa of Ávila, Testimonies 5, CWT1 p.328*

See also: **hēsychia, peace, prayer of quiet, Quietism (8.5), sahaja, stillness.**

1. Luis de la Puente, *Spiritual Guide*, OLP4 pp.228–29; in SSM2 p.253.
2. Hēsychios the Priest, *On Watchfulness* 7, *Philokalia*, PCT1 p.163.

**qurb (A/P), qurbah (A), qurbat (P)** *Lit.* *qurb* means proximity, nearness, closeness, being near; in Sufism, closeness to God; hence, *qurbah*, the state of being close to God; an advanced spiritual state of humility and obedience, in which the seeker sees God everywhere and in all things, being so immersed in Him that he is unconscious of himself, and only conscious of God; commonly contrasted with *bu’d* (remoteness).

*Qurb* is the mystical meaning behind the Quranic injunction, “Prostrate yourself and draw near (*waqtarib*) (your God)!”,<sup>1</sup> and the Quranic saying, “We (God) are (*naḥnu*) nearer (*aqrabu*) to him (man) than his jugular vein (*ḥabl al-warīd*).”<sup>2</sup> It is regarded by some Sufis, such as al-Sarrāj, as a temporary

state (*ḥāl*), but by others as a permanent station (*maqām*). Included among the latter is Ibn al-‘Arabī, one of whose books is entitled, *Maqām al-Qurbah* (‘Station of Nearness’). *Qurb* is related to the term *al-muqarrabūn* (those nearest to God), referring to those who have attained an exalted spiritual degree. Speaking of the end of time and the rewards meted out to the believers and unbelievers, the *Qur’ān* maintains:

Those foremost (in faith) will be foremost (in the hereafter):  
these will be those nearest to God (*muqarrabūn*)  
in the gardens of delight.

*Qur’ān* 56:10–12; cf. AYA

A number of Sufis have offered definitions of *qurb*:

Abū Sa‘īd al-Kharrāz said, “The reality of nearness (*qurb*) is purity of heart from all things and peace of heart with God” and “The reality of nearness (*qurb*) is where one can retain nothing in the heart nor be entrapped by the existence of anything.”

*Abū Sa‘īd al-Kharrāz, in Tadhkirat al-Awliyā’, TAN2 pp.44–45, in SSE12 p.58*

Abū Bakr Duqqī said, “The sign of nearness (*qurb*) is severance from whatever is other than God.”

*Sulamī, Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyyah, KTS p.470, in SSE12 p.59*

Nearness (*qurb*) is where one concentrates all one’s aspirations and thoughts in God’s presence, becoming absent from everything other than God.

*Bākhazī, Awrād al-Aḥbāb wa Fuṣūṣ al-Ādāb, AAF2 p.53, in SSE12 p.58*

In *ṣūfī* terminology, *qurb* is the perfect concentration and absorption of the wayfarer through absence of all his own individual attributes, to the extent that he has no awareness of his own nearness (*qurb*), absence, or absorption. If it is otherwise, he has not lost his own qualities completely.

*Maḥmūd Qāshānī, Miṣbāḥ al-Hidāyah wa-Miftāḥ al-Kifāyah, MHK p.417*

When the mystic in nearness (*qurb*) reaches the point where he loses consciousness of his own nearness (*qurb*) to God, only then does true nearness (*qurb*) obtain.

*Abū Ya‘qūb Sūsī, in Luma’ fī al-Taṣawwuf, KLTA p.57; cf. in SSE12 p.63*

The ultimate nearness (*qurb-i qurb*) is the site of union.

*Rūzbihān, Sharḥ-i Shaṭṭhiyāt 545:1285, CPS p.632, in SSE12 p.66*

In Sufi literature, *qurb* is used for varying degrees of the experience of God's nearness. Al-Qushayrī writes:

*Qurb* is the nearness (to God) that arises from meditation, and the attainment of a state of continuous worship of God. The initial nearness (*qurb*) of the devotee is having faith (*īmān*) in God. Then comes the nearness (*qurb*) of the devotee through His grace and favour, and the realization (*taḥqīq*) of God. . . . God's nearness (*qurb*) to His devotee is that He causes the devotee to know and realize Him, first through gnosis, then, ultimately, through contemplative vision (*shuhūd*) and direct observation (*'iyān*), with various forms of kindness and grace in the intervening stages. . . .

The devotee cannot attain nearness (*qurb*) to God unless he is detached from others. But this is an (internal) quality of the heart, not an external act. Nearness to God (*qurb al-Ḥaqq*) is due to His knowledge and power over all things, great and small. To believers, He is near by His grace, and through His special care. To His saints (*awliyā'*), He is near through communion with them. . . .

There was a *shaykh* who favoured one of his disciples. The others were curious about this and asked the reason. The *shaykh* gave each of them a chicken, telling them to take it somewhere where nobody could see them, and to kill it. Each did as instructed except the favourite, who returned with a live chicken. When the master asked him why, he answered, "You ordered me to kill it where nobody could see, but there is no place where God does not see." The *shaykh* then said (to the other disciples), "This is the reason I hold him dear. In you, thoughts of the material creation are dominant, in him the thought of God is dominant." . . .

Awareness of nearness (*qurb*) is itself a veil to nearness (*qurb*). Anyone who looks at anything as his own, even his breathing, falls into the snare of deception. That is why they say, "God exiles you from nearness (*qurb*) to Himself." Being aware of nearness (*qurb*) to Him is actually a mark of inattentiveness to Him, for God is beyond all such self-consciousness. The world of Reality requires astonishment and effacement.

*Al-Qushayrī, Risālah, RQQQ pp.45–46; cf. in EIM pp.138–40, in SSE12 p.56*

Rūmī explains that it is God's very nearness that makes Him imperceptible. He is obscured only by the "intricate ramifications of thought" and emotion:

Hand me the cup, You whom I see not.  
You are my face: no wonder that I see it not:  
extreme proximity (*qurb*) is a mystifying veil.



You are my reason: no wonder if I see You not,  
 on account of the abundance  
 of the intricate ramifications of thought.  
 You have come nearer (*aqrab*) to me than my jugular vein:  
 how long shall I say, “Oh!”?  
 “Oh!” is a call to one who is far off.

*Rūmī, Maṣnavī VI:665–68; cf. MJR6 p.294*

God is inexpressibly near to all creatures, whether they are spiritually evolved or not, whether they are aware of His nearness or not. The Sufis made a distinction between *qurb-i ḥaqqī* (essential nearness, nearness in essence), which is the nearness of God to all creatures, and *qurb-i ṣifī* (nearness in attributes), which is the nearness of God to the perfect saints. Rūmī uses an analogy to explain:

Nearness (*qurb*) as a result of God’s  
 creation and sustenance of us is common to all:  
 Only the noble ones possess  
 the nearness (*qurb*) of the inspiration of divine love.  
 Nearness (*qurb*) is of various kinds, O father. . . .  
 Both the green bough and the dry are near (illuminated by) the sun:  
 the sun cannot be screened off from either.  
 But how much greater is the nearness (*qurbat*) of the sappy bough,  
 from which you eat ripe fruit?  
 From nearness (*qurbat*) to the sun,  
 the dry bough will get nothing except withering sooner!

*Rūmī, Maṣnavī III:704–5, 7–9; cf. MJR4 p.41*

*Qurb* is commonly contrasted with *bu’d* (farness, distance), meaning the experience of distance between the soul and God. This is the condition of most souls in this world, arising from a scattering of the attention into the material world:

Nearness (*qurb*) is concentration, and farness (*bu’d*) is dispersion, being the absence of nearness (*qurb*).

*Shāh Nīmat Allāh Valī, Rasā’il, RNV2 p.180, in SSE12 p.57*

Nearness (*qurb*) signifies the passage of the drop towards the sea, attainment of the true Object, and characterization by divine Attributes.

Farness (*bu’d*) signifies confinement by the bonds of human attributes and selfish pleasures, which are the cause of farness (*bu’d*) from the real Source and ignorance of the true State.

*Lāhijī, Sharḥ-i Gulshan-i Rāz, SGR p.30; cf. in SSE12 p.71*

Near or far, both imply separation from the Beloved. Thus, Anṣārī writes:

The fact is that in nearness (*qurb*), there is duality, for one is conscious of being near to the other; hence, nearness (*qurb*) is still farness (*bu'd*). Sufism is unity.

*Anṣārī, Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyyah 140, TSAA p.160, in SSE12 p.72*

Ḥāfiẓ dismisses all the discussion when he says that in real divine love, there is no difference between the two:

In the way of love,  
there is no stage of nearness (*qurb*) and farness (*bu'd*).  
I gaze on You directly –  
and at the same time I send You a prayer!

*Ḥāfiẓ, Dīvān, DHA p.14, DIH p.49, in SSE12 p.71; cf. DHWC (82:3) p.188*

Nevertheless, 'Aṭṭār says that individuality has to be sacrificed before nearness can be attained:

You may be certain that the soul can never hope to attain  
nearness (*qurb*) to the Soul of Souls unless it is sacrificed.

*'Aṭṭār, Dīvān 167:3471, DASN p.189, in SSE12 p.58*

And when that happens, all attributes and differences disappear:

All trace of the attributes of the body vanished away  
when the light of nearness (*qurb*) to the Soul of Souls dawned.

*'Aṭṭār, Muṣibat Nāmāh, MNFA p.42, in FNI2 p.237, in SSE12 p.58<sup>3</sup>*

See also: **qurb al-farā'id**.

1. *Qur'ān* 96:19; cf. *MGK*.
2. *Qur'ān* 50:16, *HQSA*.
3. Note: we have been unable to find this passage in *MNFA*.

**qurb al-farā'id**, **qurb al-nawāfil** (A), **qurb-i farā'iz**, **qurb-i nawāfil** (P) *Lit.* nearness (*qurb*) of obligatory practice (*al-farā'id*); nearness (*qurb*) of supererogatory practice (*al-nawāfil*). *Qurb* implies nearness or proximity to God. Obligatory practices include the five pillars of Islam: declaration of faith, the five periods of daily prayers, alms-giving, pilgrimage to Mecca, and fasting during *Ramaḍān*. Voluntary practices include additional prayers, fastings, and so on.

The terms for these two commonly discussed stages of *qurb* are drawn from a frequently quoted *ḥadīth*:

My servant draws near to me by that which I have made obligatory for him (*farā'id*). My servant draws yet nearer to me through voluntary practice (*nawāfil*), until I love him. Then, when I love him, I become the ears by which he hears, the eyes by which he sees, the hands by which he grasps, and the feet by which he walks.

*Ḥadīth Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* 8:76.509; cf. *HSB, SPK* p.325

The saying is interpreted to mean the annihilation of the individual in the divine Essence. Sufi analysts have tried to draw a distinction between the devotee becoming the eyes and ears of God and God becoming the eyes and ears of the devotee, and they have debated which is the higher stage. The nature of the nearness arising from obligatory and voluntary practice has been the subject of much discussion among Sufis and scholars of Islamic law, though the fundamental source of information remains this single *ḥadīth*.

In *qurb al-nawāfil*, the devotee chooses what to do in order to bring himself nearer to God. His devotional acts are characterized by volition or will; he makes a conscious effort to draw near to the Divine. *Qurb al-farā'id* begins when the seeker reaches the stage of *fanā'* (annihilation of the self). In this stage of nearness, God acts through the lover; the essence or reality of the servant is annihilated in God. Some regard obligatory acts as the higher:

According to the *Tuḥfat al-Mursalāh* ('Godsend'), nearness is of two kinds:

1. That of voluntary (*nawāfil*) practice, involving the falling away of individual human attributes and the appearance of the divine Attributes making it possible for a devotee, according to his ability and with God's permission, to have control over the life and death of others, to hear sounds that are out of earshot, and to see things that are out of sight. In terms of this analysis and interpretation, this involves the annihilation of the devotee's individual attributes in the Attributes of God as the fruit of voluntary acts.
2. That of obligatory (*farā'id*) practice, involving the total annihilation of the devotee from consciousness of all created existence, such that one has no awareness of existence, not even one's own existence, and only the Existence of God remains in one's view. This is the meaning of annihilation of the devotee in God as the result of obligatory practice. In the light of this, the nearness of obligatory practice (*qurb al-farā'id*) appears more complete, more perfect.

*Tāḥānawī, Kashshāf Iṣṭilāḥāt al-Funūn, KIFT3* p.489; cf. in *SSE12* pp.63–64

Others consider the nearness resulting from voluntary practice to be the higher of the two:

In the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Bukhārī, it states that other holy ones (*aṣṣfiyā'*) maintain that the nearness of voluntary practice (*qurb al-nawāfil*) is more perfect, holding that in the nearness of obligatory practice (*qurb al-farā'id*) the devotee is an instrument and God is the agent, as indicated in the Prophet's statement: "Indeed, God speaks with the tongue of 'Umar," whereas in the nearness of voluntary practice (*qurb al-nawāfil*) God is the instrument and the devotee the agent, as indicated in the sacred tradition: "By constant voluntary practice, the devotee approaches me, until I love such a one. Then I become the ears by which he hears, the eyes by which he sees, the hands by which he grasps, and the legs by which he walks."<sup>1</sup>

*Tahānawī, Kashshāf Iṣṭilāḥāt al-Funūn, KIFT3 p.489; cf. in SSE12 p.64*

See also: **qurb**.

1. Cf. *Ḥadīth Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* 8:76.509, *HSB*.

**rāḥah** (A), **rāḥat** (P) *Lit.* rest, peace, ease, happiness, comfort; spiritual peace, rest or comfort, which can be experienced at every level up to the highest. *Rāḥat* appears in expressions such as *rāḥat-i dil* (ease of heart), which implies freedom of the heart from the *nafs* and its passions; *rāḥat-i rūḥ* or *rāḥat-i jān* (ease of spirit), which imply spiritual peace in the higher worlds, at the level of the *jān* or *rūḥ*; and *rāḥat al-abad* (eternal rest), which is the ultimate repose of the soul in the bliss and love of the Divine.

A number of the Sufi poets have portrayed spiritual rest as a companion to the pain of separation from and longing for the divine beloved. The longing for God or for the inner spiritual form of the *shaykh* or *murshid* (master) automatically detaches the mind from the transient things that otherwise occupy it and make it restless and uneasy:

You are a treasure that cannot be found without seeking;  
Without suffering, rest (*rāḥat*) in you cannot be found.

*Kamāl Khujaṇḍī, Divān, DKK p.86; cf. in SSE2 p.86*

In yearning for you, my soul is pining:  
recollection of your face delightfully increases my comfort (*rāḥat*).

*Irāqī, Kullīyāt 1680, KHI p.155; cf. in SSE2 p.86*

The wine of divine love, poured by the mystic "cupbearer" (the beloved) brings "comfort" from the constant impact of destiny and material things:

O cupbearer, pass round the cup,  
 bring some comfort (*rāḥat*) to my soul;  
 For the sadness of the circling spheres (*i.e.* destiny)  
 oppresses my heart.

*Ḥāfiẓ, Dīvān, DHA p.33, DIH p.83; cf. DHWC (72:6) p.174*

Speaking of divine knowledge, al-Qayṣarī writes:

Knowledge of this conveys complete ease (*rāḥat*) to the knower  
 thereof, as well as painful torment.

*Dāʿūd al-Qayṣarī, Sharḥ-i Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam, SFH p.132; in SSE14 p.175*

Such spiritual rest is an aspect of divine “love”:

Ease of spirit (*rāḥat-i rūḥ*) and peace of heart (*āram-i dil*) arrived,  
 bringing illumination to my bloodshot eyes.  
 Bearing signs of love, they came and settled in my heart.

*Rūmī, Kullīyāt-i Shams-i Tabrīz, KST p.476*

In the poetry of Rūmī, the “comfort of my heart (*rāḥat-i dil*)” is also an epithet  
 of the beloved for whom the heart craves:

Where are you, O comfort of my heart (*rāḥat-i dil*)?  
 Where are you, who have made my soul love-crazed?

*Rūmī, Kullīyāt-i Shams-i Tabrīz, KST p.23; cf. in SSE2 p.86*

See also: **rest**.

**rapture** Spiritually, a state of supreme bliss or joy through contact with the Divine, in which the soul is uplifted, the body and all mental faculties associated with bodily existence transcended, and their functioning temporarily suspended; also called ecstasy, ravishing, elevation, transport, or suspension of the faculties. Some mystics, such as Richard Rolle and Teresa of Ávila, have distinguished between raptures in which the senses and mental faculties continue to function and those in which they are transcended or suspended. Though it generally results from spiritual practice or prayer, rapture is nevertheless regarded as the grace of God, since it appears spontaneously, and cannot be brought about by exercise of the will.

Among the many writers who have described this state of deeply devotional consciousness, probably none have been so explicit or described so many varieties of the experience as St Teresa. Generally speaking, she distinguishes between union and rapture by the degree to which the soul is withdrawn

from the body, the senses and the mental faculties, and by the visions and revelations experienced during rapture:

Raptures and suspension of the faculties, in my opinion, are one and the same thing; I generally describe them as suspension, so as not to use the word 'rapture', which frightens people; and as a matter of fact this union which has been described may also be called suspension. The difference between it and rapture is that rapture lasts longer and is more readily perceptible from without, for little by little breathing diminishes, so that the subject cannot speak or open the eyes.

Though this same thing happens in union, in rapture the operation is more powerful, for when the rapture is deep the natural warmth vanishes, I know not whither, and to a greater or lesser extent this is characteristic of all these types of prayer. When the rapture is deep, as I say, the hands become as cold as ice, and sometimes remain stretched out as though they were made of wood. The body remains standing or kneeling, according to the position it was in when the rapture came on. And the soul is so deeply absorbed in the joy of what the Lord is showing it that it seems to forget to animate the body, and goes away and abandons it. If the rapture lasts, the nerves, too, are affected.

I think it must be the Lord's will that in rapture the soul should have a clearer understanding of what it is enjoying than it has in union, and thus during a rapture it is very usual for His Majesty to grant it certain revelations. These produce great effects on the soul, which becomes forgetful of itself, and desires only that so great a God and Lord may be known and praised. . . . The feelings and the sweetness produced in it (the soul) are so excessive by comparison with anything on earth to which they could be likened that, if the memory of them did not pass away, the soul would always feel a loathing for worldly pleasure.

*Teresa of Ávila, Testimonies 5; cf. CWTAl pp.328–29*

She also describes the after-effects of rapture, as well as the partial or complete suspension of the outer faculties:

Let us now return to raptures, and to their most usual characteristics. I can testify that after a rapture my body often seemed as light as if all weight had left it: sometimes this was so noticeable that I could hardly tell when my feet were touching the ground. For, while the rapture lasts, the body often remains as if dead and unable of itself to do anything; it remains all the time as it was when the rapture came upon it – in a sitting position, for example, or with the hands open or shut. The subject rarely loses consciousness: I have sometimes lost it altogether, but only seldom and for but a short time. As a rule,

the consciousness is disturbed; and, though incapable of action with respect to outward things, the subject can still hear and understand, but only dimly, as though from a long way off. I do not say that he can hear and understand when the rapture is at its highest point – by highest point I mean when the faculties are lost through being closely united with God. At that point, in my opinion, he will neither see, nor hear, nor perceive; but ... this complete transformation of the soul in God lasts but a short time, and it is only while it lasts that none of the soul's faculties is able to perceive or know what is taking place.

*Teresa of Ávila, Life 20; cf. CWTAl pp.125–26*

She also describes how the experience comes and goes, and how, when the rapture is past, the “two faculties” of the mind, by which she means memory and intellect or reasoned understanding, are reactivated and “return to their noisy way”:

Your Reverence will ask how it is that the rapture sometimes lasts for so many hours and occurs so often. What often happens to me is that ... the rapture is experienced intermittently. The soul is often absorbed or, to put it better, the Lord absorbs it in Himself, suspending all the faculties for a while and then, afterwards, holding only the will suspended. ... This suspension of the two faculties ... is brief. But since the loving impulse and elevation of the spirit have been great, the will remains absorbed even when the other two faculties return to their noisy way. ... For the most part, the eyes are closed, even though we may not wish to close them; and if they are occasionally open, ... the soul does not notice or pay attention to what it sees.

*Teresa of Ávila, Life 20:19; cf. CWT1 p.180, CWTAl p.126*

There are times, she says, when the soul seems to be travelling at great speed, which can fill it with fear. At that time, she advises, the soul must submit itself with resignation and confidence:

There is another kind of rapture, or flight of the spirit, as I call it, which, though substantially the same, is felt within the soul in a very different way. Sometimes the soul becomes conscious of such rapid motion that the spirit seems to be transported with a speed which, especially at first, fills it with fear, for which reason I told you that great courage is necessary for anyone in whom God is to work these favours, together with faith and confidence and great resignation, so that Our Lord may do with the soul as He wills.

*Teresa of Ávila, Interior Castle 6:5, CWT2 p.293*

And similarly:

Rapture ... often comes like a strong, swift impulse, before your thought can forewarn you of it or you can do anything to help yourself; you see and feel this cloud, or this powerful eagle, rising and bearing you up with it on its wings. You realize ... and indeed see that you are being carried away, you know not whither. For, though rapture brings us delight, the weakness of our nature at first makes us afraid of it, and we need to be resolute and courageous in soul, much more so than for what has been described. For happen what may, we must risk everything, and resign ourselves into the hands of God, and go willingly wherever we are carried away; for we are in fact being carried away, whether we like it or no.

*Teresa of Ávila, Life 20, CWTAI pp.119–20*

Richard Rolle also describes how the soul in rapture can be entirely or just partially withdrawn from consciousness of the physical senses:

It is clear that ‘enraptured’ can be understood in two ways. One way is when a man is rapt out of all physical sensation, so that at the time of his rapture his body feels absolutely nothing and does nothing. He is not dead, of course, but alive, for his soul still gives life to the body. Sometimes, the saints and the elect have been enraptured in this manner, for their own benefit and for the enlightenment of others. Thus was Paul rapt to the “third heaven”.<sup>1</sup> ...

‘Rapture’ in the other sense comes through the lifting up of the mind into God in contemplation. This is the way of all who are perfect lovers of God – and only of those who love God. It is as true to call this ‘rapture’ as the other, because there is a definite seizure, something outside nature, so to speak. ... This second way is most desirable and lovely. For Christ was always in contemplation upon God, yet it never detracted from his self-possession.

So one way is to be rapt by love while retaining physical sensation, and the other is to be rapt out of the senses by some vision, awe-inspiring or joyful. I consider the rapture of love to be the better, and more rewarding. For to have the privilege of seeing heavenly things is a matter of God’s gift, not our merit.

*Richard Rolle, Fire of Love 37; cf. FLML (2:7) pp.161–62, FLRR p.166*

The same wonderful rapture, he says, comes upon those who have perfectly aligned their individual will to that of the Divine:

‘Rapt’, too, can be used of those who have wholly and perfectly surrendered to the will of their saviour; for they deservedly ascend to the heights of contemplation. By God’s uncreated Wisdom, they are



enlightened, and their reward is to feel the heat of that indescribable Light with whose beauty they are enraptured.

This also happens to a devout soul when her every thought is ordered in the love of God, and all the waverings of her mind have subsided. Then she no longer wavers or hesitates; but all her love leads to one thing, and with great fervour she yearns for Christ, reaching out to and giving herself to him – as if only these two existed, Christ and the loving soul. Bound indissolubly to him in love and in ecstasy of mind, flying beyond the confines of the body, she drinks deep from the chalice of heaven, which is wonderful beyond belief. But she could never have come to this had not the grace of God rapt her from her inward desires, and set her on the spiritual heights where, unsurprisingly, she receives the uplifting gifts of grace.

When, therefore, with a free and unshakable heart, she meditates consciously upon only those things that are divine and heavenly, she finds her mind swept away and rapt to heaven, far above all bodily and visible things. Now without doubt is she on the point of receiving and feeling in herself the heat of love, and is about to dissolve into the sweetness of spiritual song; for this is the result of such rapture upon one who is chosen to receive it.

*Richard Rolle, Fire of Love 37; cf. FLML (2:7) pp.162–63, FLRR pp.166–67*

He goes on to praise this state above all other experiences of life:

This is why rapture is such a great and marvellous thing and, as it seems to me, superior to everything else we do in life: for it is regarded as a foretaste of everlasting sweetness. And it surpasses, unless I am mistaken, all other gifts that in this earthly pilgrimage God grants to His saints by way of reward.

*Richard Rolle, Fire of Love 37; cf. FLML (2:7) p.163, FLRR p.167*

Jan van Ruysbroek also describes rapture in a similar manner. Often, he says, the experience is brief:

Sometimes man can be drawn above himself and above the spirit, but not in every respect outside himself, into an incomprehensible richness that he can never again find words for, or describe in the way that he heard and saw it: for in this pure experience and this pure vision, to hear and to see are one and the same. And no one can achieve this in man except God alone, without means and without the co-operation of any creature. This is called rapture, which is the same as saying ‘carried off by force’ or ‘overpowered’.

Sometimes, God gives to such men a brief glimpse in the spirit like lightning in heaven, so to speak. In this case, a brief glimpse of a

peculiar clarity is manifest, and it shines forth from pure nakedness (of being), and so in the twinkling of an eye the spirit is exalted above itself, and then immediately the light is gone, and the man returns to himself. God Himself performs this, and it is most excellent, because men are often enlightened.

*Jan van Ruysbroek, Spiritual Espousals 2:11; cf. SER pp.107–8*

Raptures, however enjoyable, are not the end of the spiritual path. St Teresa wrote that she ultimately reached a point of great peace and tranquillity in God, in which the raptures she had previously experienced were far less frequent.<sup>2</sup> Writing several centuries later, Nancy Mayorga says much the same:

This light grows from everywhere, infinitely. No longer is it the hot rapture of former ecstasy, but, as St John of the Cross said, “It is the calm, lonely, sweet, peaceful ravisher of the spirit.” I gaze into that light and let Him, and I whisper incredulously, “How sweet! How sweet! How sweet!” ... Oh I would like to stay forever in the deep, dark comfort of God!

*Nancy Mayorga, Hunger of the Soul, HSDM p.112*

In fact, St Teresa says that a nun’s spiritual progress is not judged by her inner experiences, but by her humility:

If you want to know whether you have made progress or not, sisters, you may be sure that you have if each of you thinks herself the worst of all, and shows that she thinks this by acting for the profit and benefit of the rest. Progress has nothing to do with enjoying the greatest number of consolations in prayer, nor with raptures, visions or favours given by the Lord, or things of that kind, the value of which we cannot estimate until we reach the world to come.

*Teresa of Ávila, Way of Perfection 18, CWTA2 pp.74–75*

Italian mystic Angela de Foligno (c. 1248–1309) writes in a more general way that in rapture, the “soul swims in joy and knowledge”:

There is nothing then that the soul understands or comprehends to be compared with the rapture to which she can inwardly attain. For when the soul is lifted up above herself by the illumination of God’s presence, then she understands and takes delight and rests in those good things of God that she can in no wise describe, for they are above the understanding and above all manner of speech and above all words. But in these the soul swims in joy and knowledge!

*Angela of Foligno, Book of Visions and Instructions 56, VIAF pp.191–92; cf. in GIP p.277*

See also: **ecstasy**, **ravishing**.

1. 2 *Corinthians* 12:2.
2. Teresa of Ávila, *Interior Castle* 7:3, CWT2 p.342.

**rasāsvāda** (S) *Lit.* tasting (*svāda*) nectar (*rasa*); a perception or hint of pleasure; in *Advaita Vedānta*, satisfaction with a level of bliss lower than that of the Supreme; the bliss obtained from preliminary spiritual experiences; also, the momentary feeling of uplift that accompanies some realization or the overcoming of some obstacle or weakness.

In *Advaita Vedānta*, *rasāsvāda* is regarded as one of the four main obstacles to *samādhi* (absorption, deep meditation), the other three being *laya* (sleepiness, torpidity), *vikshepa* (distraction, agitation), and *kashāya* or *bhogalālasa* (deep-rooted attachment, desire for sensual enjoyment). In its highest expression, *rasāsvāda* is the enjoyment of the bliss of *savikalpa samādhi* (conditioned absorption, absorption with a lingering trace of self-consciousness) as opposed to the higher *nirvikalpa samādhi*, where all trace of self-consciousness is lost:

Enjoyment (*rasāsvāda*) is the tasting by the mental state of the bliss of *savikalpa samādhi* owing to the failure to rest on the Absolute. Or it may mean continuing to taste the bliss of *savikalpa samādhi* while taking up the *nirvikalpa samādhi*.

*Sadānanda, Vedāntasāra* 213, VSY p.115

When practising *samādhi*, many obstacles unavoidably appear, such as lack of interest (*anusandhāna-rāhitya*), apathy (*ālasya*), desire for sense pleasures (*bhoga-lālasa*), sleep (*laya*), dullness (*tama*), distraction (*vikshepa*), tasting of joy (*rasāsvāda*), and a sense of emptiness (*shūnyatā*). One who desires knowledge of *Brahman* should slowly get rid of such innumerable obstacles.<sup>1</sup>

*Shankara, Aparokshānubhūti* 127–28; cf. *SRSS* p.69

Swami Nikhilananda provides greater detail:

His (the aspirant's) mind, unable to rest in *Brahman*, yet detached from the world, may feel quite satisfied with the enjoyment of an inferior bliss (*rasāsvāda*) – a foretaste of the bliss of *Brahman* – and be then unwilling to make any further effort to reach the goal. As a result of self control and meditation, he may be rewarded by visions and ecstasies, which are only milestones on his path. The unwary devotee takes these secondary experiences for the real thing and remains absorbed in their enjoyment. Sometimes, he may become so engrossed in the bliss of

the *savikalpaka samādhi* that he refuses to give it up and plunge into the all-annihilating experience of the great Beyond.

It may also happen that the aspirant, in pursuit of his spiritual ideal, is challenged by the stubborn and importunate craving of a particular sense organ. He puts up a heroic fight against the enemy. When at last he wins, he feels so happy at his success that he totally gives himself up to the enjoyment of this triumph. He forgets that he had set out to realize *Brahman*. Vedantic teachers illustrate this by the story of a man who wanted to lay hold of a treasure buried under a tree and zealously guarded day and night by a powerful dragon. As he came near the tree the dragon challenged him, and a vicious and protracted battle ensued. Ultimately the dragon was destroyed. But the man, beside himself with joy at this triumph over his enemy, danced around the tree, forgetting altogether the pot of treasure.

*Swami Nikhilananda, Self-Knowledge, SKS pp.137–38*

Swami Vivekananda likewise explains to a disciple:

**Q.** Sometimes sitting at *japa* (repetition of a *mantra*) one gets joy at first, but then one seems to be disinclined to continue the *japa* owing to that joy. Should it be continued then?

**A.** Yes, that joy is a hindrance to spiritual practice, its name being *rasāsvāda*. One must rise above that.

*Swami Vivekananda, Answers, CWSV5 p.324*

See also: **samādhi**, **vikshepa**.

1. Cf. *Tejobindu Upanishad* 40–42.

**ravishing** Spiritually, a state of supreme bliss or joy through contact with the Divine; often expressed as being ‘ravished from oneself’ – being lifted out of oneself by divine love or divine light; being spiritually uplifted and inwardly rapt, the body and all mental faculties associated with bodily existence being transcended and their functioning temporarily held in abeyance; also called ecstasy or rapture.

In their love for the Divine, many Christian writers have turned to the incomparable *Song of Songs* to find expression for their love. Here, the divine beloved himself, in metaphorical terms, expresses his love for the soul:

You ravish my heart,  
my sister, my promised bride;  
You ravish my heart

with a single one of your glances,  
 with one single pearl of your necklace.  
 What spells lie in your love,  
 my sister, my promised bride!

*Song of Songs 4:9–10, JB*

It is God's love for the soul that in turn draws or ravishes the soul, taking it entirely out of itself:

The love of God is a consuming fire that ravishes us out of ourselves and swallows us up in unity with God, where we are satisfied and overflowing with Him, beyond ourselves, eternally fulfilled.

*Jan van Ruysbroek, Twelve Beguines 16:2; cf. BTB p.114*

Inner experience of the divine light and love completely overwhelms and ravishes the mind:

The mind (*nous*) is so ravished by the divine and infinite Light that it is aware neither of itself nor of any other created thing, but only of Him who through love has activated such radiance in it.

*Maximos the Confessor, On Love 2:6, Philokalia; cf. PCT2 p.66*

Even if a person leads a busy life, it does not prevent his being entirely ravished during the time set aside for prayer:

A man may be occupied throughout the day, and devote himself for but a single hour to prayer, and still be carried away inwardly by it, entering into the infinite depths of the other world. He experiences then an ineffable and measureless delight; his mind (*nous*), wholly suspended and ravished, is overwhelmed, and during the time he is in this state he is mindless of every worldly concern. For his thoughts are filled . . . with numberless incomprehensible realities, and are taken captive by them. In that hour, his soul through prayer becomes one with his prayer and is carried away with it.

*Makarios of Egypt, On Love 91, Philokalia; cf. PCT3 pp.325–26*

Some writers speak of inner sound as well as light, which ravishes the soul with joy. Richard Rolle, who himself writes elsewhere of how his mind sometimes becomes changed to a song or melody of praise,<sup>1</sup> admits that such people do not explain how this comes about:

Some . . . say that a sweet and spiritual song sounds in their heart, by which the thirsty soul is ravished and made glad. But they do not

explain, as far as I can make out, how it is that their thought is changed to song, or how the melody dwells in the mind, or the kind of praise it is by which he sings his prayers.

*Richard Rolle, Fire of Love 36; cf. FLML p.159, FLRR p.164*

Though it is unclear whether he is speaking from belief or experience, Walter Hilton attributes this “heavenly sound” to the song of angels:

When the soul is lifted and ravished out of the sensuality, and out of mind of any earthly things, then, in great fervour of love and light, . . . the soul may hear and feel heavenly sound, made by the presence of angels in loving of God. . . .

In the love of God, a soul by the presence of angels is ravished out of mind of all earthly and bodily things into a heavenly joy, to hear angels’ song and heavenly sound.

*Walter Hilton, Song of Angels, CSK p.67*

See also: **ecstasy, rapture.**

1. Richard Rolle, *Fire of Love* 5, 11, 15, *FLRR* pp.60, 76, 93, 95, *passim*.

**rayy** (A/P), **rī**, **rīy** (A) *Lit.* quenching, satisfaction of thirst; mystically, one of the stages of mystic revelation. First is *dhawq* (tasting), followed by *shurb* (drinking), and then by *rī* (quenching) and *sukr* (intoxication).<sup>1</sup> Al-Qushayrī explains that *rayy* (or *rī*) is associated with the sobriety (*ṣaḥw*) or inner stability that follows intoxication (*sukr*):

First there is tasting (*dhawq*), then drinking (*shurb*) and finally quenching (*rayy*). The wayfarers are led to the tasting (*dhawq*) of spiritual realities by the purity of their spiritual practice. They are led to drinking (*shurb*) by their steady progress through the (successive) stations. They are led to quenching (*rayy*) by the duration of their moments in union. One who tastes is in a state of semi-intoxication (*tasākūr*); one who drinks is in a state of intoxication (*sukr*); and the one whose thirst is quenched is in a state of sobriety (*ṣaḥw*).

*Al-Qushayrī, Risālah, RQQQ p.42; cf. in SSE2 pp.103–4*

Rūzbihān also tries to explain the relationship between these various states, adding a comment from Maṣṣūr al-Ḥallāj who says that in reality the yearning for God is never quenched:

Quenching (*rayy*) is experienced by those lovers who enjoy perpetual union, continual drinking and eternal time (*yasarmadu waqtahu*)

in contemplation, whose mystical state and ecstasy are so fervent as to be characterized by ‘sobriety after intoxication (*al-ṣaḥw ba’d al-sukr*)’. Here, the lover, having found God after the realization of His Attributes, subsists in Him through Him, unmoved by either intoxication (*sukr*) or affliction. His thirst has been quenched through annihilation (*fanā*) in eternity. . . .

Unable to find repose in God despite his thirst (*‘aṭash*) for Him, the lover’s quenching (*rayy*) stems from neither an inhibited drinking capacity, nor shortage of wine, nor diminished craving, but from the realization of annihilation (*fanā*) of self in subsistence in God (*baqā*), and subsistence in God through annihilation (*fanā*) of self. . . .

In this early stage, the lover experiences quenching (*rayy*) through the taste of ecstasy (*dhawq al-wajd*); in its intermediate stage, it is experienced as drinking in the pure presence of the moment (*shurb ṣafā’ al-waqt*), and in the final stage, it is realized as union with God within God through annihilation (*fanā*) and subsistence.

A ṣūfī master stated that, “One who experiences drinking (*shurb*) is in intoxication (*sukr*) and one who realizes quenching (*rayy*) is in sobriety (*ṣaḥw*).”

Al-‘Arif (the gnostic, al-Ḥallāj) said: “When the wayfarer has become established in contemplation through annihilation (*fanā*) therein, so that it is permanently present within him, then his thirst is quenched (*murtawī*) and he possesses delight (*ḥazz*). However, once he has been annihilated by God in God so that no trace of his temporal nature taints his eternal being, his thirst then can never be quenched (*rayy*), for the oceans of pre-eternity are endless, and the drinking (*shurb*) of those who are absorbed in divine union is everlasting!”

*Rūzbihān, Mashrab al-Arwāḥ* 7:5, MARB p.130; cf. in SSE2 pp.104–5

See also: **dhawq**, **ṣaḥw**, **shurb**, **sukr**.

1. See W.C. Chittick, *Sufī Path of Knowledge*, SPK pp.220, 392–93 (n.36).

**redemption** (He. *kopher*, Gk. *lytron*, L. *redemptio*) In general, deliverance upon payment of a price; the state of having been redeemed; in religion, deliverance from suffering, evil, mortality, death, sin, the consequences of sin, *etc.*; used particularly in Christianity for restoration from the bondage of sin and its consequences through the incarnation, sufferings and death of Christ, who took upon himself the “sin of the world”;<sup>1</sup> the restoration of humankind to its original spiritual state through the passion of Christ; also, the release of the soul from the cycle of birth and death; often used synonymously with salvation, deliverance, and emancipation.

The Latin *redemptio*, from *redimere* (to buy back), is the *Vulgate*'s rendering of the Hebrew *kopher* and the Greek *lytron*. In the Hebrew Bible, *kopher* generally means a ransom price. In the letters of St Paul, it is the "great price"<sup>2</sup> said to have been paid by Christ for human redemption. It presupposes that man once enjoyed a spiritual estate, from which he fell, under the influence of sin. Redemption implies God's acceptance of the payment, and humanity's restoration to its former condition. Although mentioned throughout Christian literature, redemption is regarded as a mystery that cannot be understood by human understanding. According to Christian belief, it is the soul and body that receive redemption, in accordance with the belief in general resurrection of the body on the Day of Judgment.

In a number of gnostic texts, the understanding of redemption is expanded into a cosmogonic myth in which the entire creation receives redemption through the medium of the incarnated *Logos*. The *Tripartite Tractate* maintains that the divine will subjected the creation to sin so that it might then be saved. It also says that it is the return to God that is called redemption.<sup>3</sup> In gnostic belief, unlike mainstream Christianity, it is only the immortal soul or spiritual element in creation that is in need of redemption. The soul is in need of rescue from the body and all materiality.

Sometimes, redemption specifically entails the soul's release from transmigration. This is particularly true of Manichaeism, where the redemption of the 'particles of light' is a fundamental doctrine. After speaking of the soul's passage through "ten thousand births", a Persian text adds:

It needs a guide who will show it the way to redemption from evil – to the blessed state of the soul – to eternal, unmingled, and unceasing Goodness.

*Manichaean Hymns, MM2 p.299ff., RMP ae; cf. GSR p.251*

In a similar vein, a Parthian hymn exhorts the soul to seek redemption, shaking off intoxication with this world and returning to its original, natural home:

Worthy are you of salvation!  
To you, O soul of light, I would impart much counsel,  
so that you may attain redemption.  
Come, O souls, to this ship of light!  
My most beloved soul, noble and blessed,  
where have you gone? Return!  
Awake, dear soul, from the sleep of drunkenness  
into which you have fallen!  
Look upon your enemies, how they prepare death all around you!  
Reach your home, that land created by the Word,  
where you were in the beginning.

*Manichaean Hymns, HR2 p.49ff., RMP cv; cf. GSR p.147*



See also: **salvation**.

1. *John* 1:29, *KJV*; see also *John* 4:42, 6:51.
2. *1 Corinthians* 6:20.
3. *Tripartite Tractate* 117, 124–25, *NHS22* pp.304–5, 316–17.

**reign** Metaphorically and in a spiritual or religious context, the ‘rule’ or ‘reign’ of God over His creation; a part of a family of metaphors, commonly used by Jewish, Christian and gnostic writers, in which God is perceived as the King or Sovereign. Since Christ is also depicted as the King, Christian writers sometimes describe the bliss of eternity as ‘reigning’ with Christ forever:<sup>1</sup>

Be assured that a man cannot enjoy both kinds of happiness; he cannot enjoy all the pleasures of this life, and also reign with Christ in heaven.

*Thomas à Kempis, Imitation of Christ* 1:24, *ICTK* p.62

Because to reign implies control, Christ is said to reign in the heart of the devout, just as the love of God is said to reign in the soul:

Love, while it is alive in the soul, reigns supreme and holds sway over all the emotions, leading the will to put God before everything else without delay, without exception, without reserve.

*François de Sales, Love of God* 10:3; cf. *LGFS* p.408

Likewise, sin and the devil were also said to reign in the souls of the wicked.

The expression was also used in gnostic descriptions of the ascent of the soul. To reach a particular station or region within was to “reign” over all below, in the sense that all below comes within the consciousness of the soul as it ascends. Hence, a gnostic writer says:

Listen, my son, to my advice. Do not be arrogantly in opposition to every good opinion, but take for yourself the side of the divine *Logos*. Keep the holy commandments of Jesus Christ, and you will reign over every region in creation, and will be honoured by the angels and the archangels. Then you will acquire them as friends and fellow servants, and you will gain a place in heaven above.

*Teachings of Silvanus* 91; cf. *NHS30* pp.296–99

Speaking of the journey’s end and the soul’s union or joining with God, another author writes:

Watch and pray that you do not come to be in the flesh (again), but rather that you come forth from the bondage of the bitterness of this

life. And as you pray, you will find rest, for you have left behind the suffering and the disgrace. For when you come forth from the sufferings and passions of the body, you will receive rest from the Good One, and you will reign with the King – you, joined with Him, and He with you, from now on, for ever and ever.

*Book of Thomas the Contender 145, NHS21 pp.204–5*

The same hope is expressed in the Manichaean hymns, when the saviour promises the soul:

You will pass in safety through every gate.  
 You will reign in gladness and freedom for evermore.  
 You will enter that land of bliss  
 and rejoice in the gladness of that realm.  
 You will dwell in tranquillity  
 and anguish will never visit you again.

*Manichaean Hymns, Huwīdagmān VIIIa:1–3; cf. MHCP pp.110–11*

See also: **King** (2.1), **king** (7.1).

1. Cf. 2 Timothy 2:12.

**rest, eternal rest, immortal rest** The inherent peace of the soul; the peace of the soul in heaven, in eternity, with God, *etc.*; a commonly used term in Jewish, Christian and allied literature, as in the *Psalms*, where the psalmist seeks “rest” in God:

In God alone is there rest (*dumiyah*) for my soul,  
 from Him comes my salvation (*yeshu’a*);  
 With Him alone for my rock, my salvation (*yeshu’a*),  
 my fortress, I can never fall.

*Psalms 62:1–2; cf. JB*

Here, *dumiyah* (rest) means stillness and silence, from the root *damah* (to be silent). In the *Wisdom of Jesus ben Sirach*, it is the divine “Wisdom”, the creative power, that brings this “rest” to the soul:

Go after her (Wisdom) and seek her;  
 she will reveal herself to you;  
 For in the end you will find rest (*anapausis*) in her  
 and she will take the form of joy for you.

*Wisdom of Jesus ben Sirach 6:27–28, JB*

In Matthew's gospel, Jesus promises "rest" to all who surrender themselves to Him. Here, he is echoing similar "come unto me" passages in *Isaiah*, *Proverbs* and the *Wisdom of Jesus ben Sirach*,<sup>1</sup>

Come unto me, all you that labour and are heavy laden,  
and I will give you rest.  
Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me,  
for I am meek and lowly in heart,  
and you shall find rest (*anapausis*) for your souls.  
For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

*Matthew 11:28–30; cf. KJV*

These passages must have been well loved by ancient writers, for echoes of it are not uncommon. In the *Odes of Solomon* (c. 100 CE) "rest" is a favourite expression of the author:

Draw for yourselves water  
from the Living Spring of the Lord,  
because it has been opened to you.  
Come, all you who thirst, and take a draught,  
and rest beside the Spring of the Lord.  
For fair it is and pure,  
and gives rest to the soul. . . .  
Blessed are they who have drunk from it  
and have found rest thereby.

*Odes of Solomon 30:1–3, 7, OSD p.134*

Echoing Jesus' words in *Matthew*, he writes that this rest has come to him by the grace of the Word:

His Word came to me,  
and gave me the fruits of my labours;  
And gave me rest by the grace of the Lord.

*Odes of Solomon 37:3–4, OSD p.156*

In other verses, the same writer says that it has all been a gift of the divine "Truth":

And he was with me and gave me rest,  
and did not let me err,  
because he was and is the Truth.

*Odes of Solomon 38:4, OSD p.158*

And again:

And the Lord renewed me with His garment,  
and possessed me with His light.  
And from above He gave me immortal rest,  
and I became like the land that blossoms,  
and rejoices in its fruits.

*Odes of Solomon 11:11–12, OSD p.52*

The rest of the soul refers not only to the peace of eternity, but also to the tranquillity of a soul that seeks God in contemplation and prayer, seeking no comfort in outer things. As Isaac of Nineveh writes, “The soul that loves God finds its rest in God only.”<sup>2</sup> Or as Thomas à Kempis says:

The true, inward lover of Jesus and the Truth, who is free from inordinate desires, can turn freely to God, rise above self, and joyfully rest in God.

*Thomas à Kempis, Imitation of Christ 2:1, ICTK p.69*

He also adds that the inner tranquillity found in human life is always liable to interruption:

Do not imagine that you can avoid anxiety in this life, or that you may never experience sorrow of heart or pain of body, for true peace is only to be found in the state of eternal rest. So do not think that you have found true peace when you happen to experience no trouble, and do not think that all is well when no one opposes you.

*Thomas à Kempis, Imitation of Christ 3:25, ICTK p.127*

St Augustine maintains that the “Word, who is His only Son” was sent by God in the form of Jesus, so that human sins may be forgiven by his suffering and death, and so that

when love has been diffused in our hearts by His Spirit, and when all difficulties have been surmounted, we may come to eternal rest and to the ineffable sweetness of the contemplation of God.

*St Augustine, City of God 7:31, CGAP p.293*

The term appears throughout the ancient literature of the Middle East – canonical or apocryphal, gnostic or orthodox – demonstrating that whatever differences there may appear to be between doctrines, the followers of all these religious and spiritual paths sought the eternal peace of the soul. The Manichaeans, for example, so hated by orthodox Christianity, were in search

of the same peace and rest as the Christians. In the Manichaean hymns in Parthian, the saviour promises to take the soul out of the realm of birth and death to “rest . . . in the place of salvation”:

Fear and death shall never more overtake you,  
nor ravage, distress, and wretchedness.  
Rest shall be yours in the place of salvation,  
in the company of all the gods  
and those who dwell in quietness.

*Manichaean Hymns, Angad Rōšnān VI:72–73; cf. MHCP pp.152–53*

See also: **land** (2.1), **peace**.

1. *Isaiah* 55:1–3; *Proverbs* 9:5–6; *Wisdom of Jesus ben Sirach* 24:19–20.
2. Isaac of Nineveh, *Treatises* 4, *On Excellence*, MTIN p.28.

**return to God** The return of the immortal soul to its native home or divine Source; a doctrine common to Hinduism, Sikhism and the Indian *sant* tradition, as well as Greek mysticism and gnosticism.

The immortality and pre-existence of the soul prior to birth was a point of considerable contention in early Christianity. Plato, Plotinus and those very early Christians such as Origen who followed the Platonist tradition, believed in the pre-existence of the soul prior to its human existence. The soul was understood to be essentially divine, to possess kinship with God – perceived as the highest Being, the supreme Beauty, Truth, the One, or the Good. The soul is a part of the divine Being, and has the potential to return to or be reunited with Him, by means of contemplation or *theōria*.

With the development and ‘standardization’ of Christian doctrine in the fourth century, ‘orthodox’ Christianity increasingly rejected the concept of a soul that had once existed with God, opting instead for belief in souls that are created out of nothing, individually infused into the embryo at the moment of conception. According to this doctrine, there is an unsurpassable gulf between the uncreated and self-subsistent God and all created things, which have been created out of nothing by the divine will. There is nothing intermediate between the uncreated God and His creation. There is no on-going emanative process by which the divine Word forms and sustains creation.

In Christianity, therefore, there is no notion of the soul’s return to God, except in the broadest sense of God as the creator and origin of the soul, and the inward turning of the soul towards Him.<sup>1</sup> The theology of Origen, at one time held in high esteem, was later vilified, and finally anathematized (officially cursed) at the Fifth Ecumenical Council, convened at Byzantium in 553 by the Emperor Justinian.

For the Greek mystics, the return of the wandering soul to its original abode was an integral part of ancient mystical philosophy. According to Socratēs, after death, for those who have lived a virtuous life, there is a “pure abode” in which to dwell, while for those who have lived the life of philosophy, there are realms of yet more indescribable beauty:

Those who are found to have excelled in holy living are released from this earthly prison, and ascend to their pure abode, which is above, and dwell there in their true country. And of those, all who have duly purified themselves by philosophy (*philosophia*) live henceforth altogether without bodies, and pass to mansions still more beautiful, which are not easy to describe, nor do we now have enough time left to tell.

*Plato, Phaedo 114b–c; cf. CDP p.94, DP1 p.473*

According to Plato’s allegory of the soul as a winged charioteer, all souls revolve in the cycle of transmigration, one cycle of which lasts ten thousand years, after which time they return to their divine origin. Souls are imprisoned in this cycle because they have ‘lost their wings’. However, this long period of births and rebirths can be shortened to just three successive periods of a thousand years if a soul chooses to live the life of philosophy, and thus re-grows its wings faster:

Now in all these lives, whoever lives righteously obtains a better lot, and whoever lives unrighteously, a worse. But to the (original, divine) state from which a soul has come, she does not return for some ten thousand years. For it takes that much time for a soul to grow her wings again, except for the soul of one who has sought wisdom sincerely or has been a lover of wisdom (*philosophos*). Such souls, if for three successive periods of a thousand years, they have three times chosen such a life, then, regaining their wings in the three thousandth year, they obtain release.

*Plato, Phaedrus 248e–249a*

So the soul of the philosopher can return to its Source, while others are judged and are either sent beneath the earth to receive punishment or are raised into some heavenly region. After spending time in these realms, they are then reborn, perhaps even as beasts. The philosopher’s spirit or mind (*dianoia*), on the other hand, “always, so far as he is able, clings in recollection to those things in which God abides, communion with which causes him to be divine”. Consequently, he re-grows his wings “through recollection of those things which our soul once beheld, when it journeyed with God”. He thus raises his vision above those things that only seem to exist, and rises up once more into “real Being”.<sup>2</sup>

The return of the soul to its divine origin is again a key aspect of the teachings of Plotinus:

To Real Being we return, all that we have and are: to That we return,  
for from That we came.

*Plotinus, Enneads 6:5.7; cf. PEC p.307*

The soul's return, he says is spiritual, not physical, making use of an inner vision, "which everyone has but few use":

But how shall we find the way? What practice must we follow? How can one see the inaccessible Beauty that dwells within the holy sanctuary, remote from the common ways where the profane may see it? Let him who can, arise and withdraw into himself, leaving without all that the eyes know, turning away forever from the material beauty that was once his joy. . . . "Let us fly, then, to our beloved fatherland:"<sup>3</sup> this is the soundest counsel.

But what then is our way of escape? How are we to gain the open sea? . . . Our fatherland is There, whence we have come; and There too is our Father. What then is our course, what the manner of our flight? This is no journey for the feet, for our feet only carry us from place to place, from one country to another. Nor need you ready a carriage or a boat to carry you away. Set aside all these things, and do not look. Close your eyes, and call instead upon another kind of vision, which is to be awakened within you, which everyone has but few use.

*Plotinus, Enneads 1:6.8; cf. PA1 pp.256–59, PEC p.25*

The same theme is repeated many times by later followers of the ancient philosophy. Hieroclēś, a fifth-century (CE) Pythagorean, writes that the soul returns home by means of the *Logos*:

Concerning the return of the soul to the place from which she descended, the same Plato says: "The man, who by the *Logos* has overcome the tumult and wild disorder that are occasioned in him by the mixture of earth, water, air and fire, retakes this primal form, and recovers his original dwelling."<sup>4</sup>

*Hieroclēś, Golden Verses of Pythagoras 54–60; cf. HVP p.106*

Writing of the evils, the "abyss of carnal desires" and the "violent tempest" of material life, the same writer says:

The only way to be delivered from all these evils is to return to God; and this return only they enjoy who have the eyes and ears of their soul always open to recovery of the things that are truly good; and who, by

the faculty they have of raising themselves up to God, have healed the evil that is inherent in our nature. . . . And this way is the return which holy philosophy inspires us to make.

*Hieroclēs, Golden Verses of Pythagoras 54–66; cf. HVP pp.110, 117*

The gnostic story of the soul, though expressed in a multitude of often complex myths, tells essentially of the soul's fall into creation and subsequent return to God in the company of the saviour. In Valentinian gnosticism, the Greek word used for the return of the soul to its true home was *apokatastasis*. In the *Gospel of Truth*, this saviour is the mystic Son, also called the "Name of the Father", who is the primal emanation of the Father, "to whom all will return who have come forth from Him."<sup>5</sup> In the *Apocryphon of John*, the Father (the "Invisible One") sends the Christ on a mission of redemption. The Christ praises Him, saying, "It is for your sake that the All (all created things) has come into being, and it is to you that the All will return."<sup>6</sup> In another gnostic text, the soul in this world is admonished:

You are sleeping, dreaming dreams.  
Wake up and return,  
taste and eat the true food!  
Hand out the Word and the Water of Life!  
Cease from the evil lusts and desires.

*Concept of Our Great Power 39–40, NHS11 pp.302–5*

Likewise, in the *Teachings of Silvanus*, the soul is advised:

From now on, then, my son, return to your divine nature. . . . Return, my son, to your first Father, God, and Wisdom your Mother, from whom you came into being in the very beginning.

*Teachings of Silvanus 90–91; cf. TS pp.24–27*

In these texts, the Son, the Name, the Word, the Water of Life and Wisdom are all terms for the creative power by which the soul returns to the Divine. Again, in the *Gospel of Thomas*:

Jesus said:  
"Blessed are the solitary and elect, for you will find the kingdom:  
for you are from it, and to it you will return."

*Gospel of Thomas 41:49, NHS20 pp.72–73*

And in the *Robe of Glory*, one of the most complete and lyrical retellings of the ancient tale, the soul receives a speaking Letter (again, the Word) which says to the slumbering soul:



Up and arise from your slumber,  
 and listen to the words of our Letter!  
 Call to mind that you are a son of kings!  
 See the slavery – and whom you serve!  
 Remember the pearl  
 for which you were sent to Egypt!  
 Think of your bright robe,  
 and remember your glorious toga,  
 which you shall put on as your adornment.  
 Your name is named in the Book of Life,  
 and with your brother, whom you have received,  
 you shall return to our kingdom.

*Robe of Glory 43–48, Acts of Thomas IX, PSW pp.190–91*

Manichaean texts tell the same story. The soul is to return to God, the Father, the kingdom of light, in the company of the divine saviour:

Now go aboard the ships of light,  
 and receive your garland of glory,  
 and return to your kingdom.

*Manichaean Psalm Book CCXLVI; cf. MPB p.55*

And:

Open to me your paradises,  
 that my spirit may receive your Fragrance.  
 My robe is ready,  
 that I may return to my Father rejoicing.

*Manichaean Psalm Book; cf. MPB p.154*

See also: **immortality of the soul** (5.1).

1. E.g. St Augustine, *Confessions* 1:18, 8:8.
2. Plato, *Phaedrus* 249b–c.
3. Homer, *Iliad* 2:140.
4. Untraceable, may be a misquote.
5. *Gospel of Truth* 38, NHS22 pp.110–11.
6. *Apocryphon of John* 9, NHS33 p.55.

**revelation(s)** (Gk. *apokalypsis*) The disclosure of something that was previously secret, obscure or unknown, particularly in a sudden, unexpected or dramatic manner, and especially of something true; also, the fact or truth thus revealed;

in religion and spirituality, the supernatural disclosure of mysteries concerning God, or the worlds unseen, or human existence, and which are revealed either by God Himself or other supernatural agency, in a dream, through a human intermediary, or by personal mystical experience; God's revelation of Himself to a human being; the communication of some fact or truth to a human being by means outside of normal human experience, though not necessarily beyond the comprehension of reason. While revelations are not necessarily visions, visions are generally revelations.

In religion, revelation is commonly regarded as the actual words of God spoken in a particular language, either directly or through an intermediary. Hence, the Bible and the *Qur'ān* are both regarded by some as revelations of the actual words of God. Others have maintained that sacred literature, at best, contains only symbols and pointers concerning divine truth, rather than the truth itself. Others not only regard all sacred literature as the product of the unaided human mind, often of a mind in disarray, but they also deny the possibility of any infusion of knowledge from a divine, supernatural, or superconscious source.

The message of prophets or mystics such as Moses, Zarathushtra, Jesus, Mānī and Muḥammad was also regarded as divine revelation. In biblical times, the primary channel by which revelation was brought to human beings was understood to be via the prophets. It was through them that God spoke to and taught His 'chosen' people. Though the story may be more symbolic than historic, the revelation of the one God and the Ten Commandments given to Moses on Mount Sinai, according to *Exodus*, is the primary revelation underlying the Jewish religion. In Christianity, Judaism is regarded as having been the trustee of divine revelation until the new revelation of Jesus as the incarnation of the divine Word.

Many religious texts of ancient times, by acknowledged prophets as well as others, were written as 'revelations'. The books of Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and many others are largely comprised of revelatory material. 'Revelations' became a common literary genre of the times, adopted by early Christians, gnostics, hermeticists, and others. Some would have been a record of actual experiences; others were no doubt fictional, never intended to be taken as anything more than a literary device. Sometimes the author described the revelation as a dialogue with an angel or other heavenly manifestation, sometimes with the resurrected Jesus or other historical or mythical personality of the past. Such revelations were generally depicted as being of a mystical or visionary nature, everything taking place within the consciousness of the recipient. Many revelations – known as apocalypses – concerned themselves with the end of time, such as the last book of the New Testament.

Revelation was itself regarded as a touchstone of authenticity. Paul himself writes that he received no teaching from either the man Jesus, nor from his disciples, but directly by revelation:

I certify you, brethren, that the gospel that has been preached by me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, except by the revelation (*apokalypsis*) of Jesus Christ.

*Galatians 1:11–12; cf. KJV*

While such assertions may raise doubts in a sceptical mind, to Paul it was a fundamentally acceptable source, and gave him all the authority he needed to preach:

Now, brethren, even if I come to you speaking in tongues, in what way will it benefit you, unless I speak to you either by revelation (*apokalypsis*), or by knowledge, or by prophesying, or by doctrine?

*1 Corinthians 14:6; cf. KJV*

Revelations, visions and mystical experiences are sometimes categorized either as those with private and personal value or those with a wider application, such as the revelation of a sacred book or something held to be a universal truth. Not all ‘revelations’ are to be trusted, however. Many spiritual and religious teachers have warned of the dangers of self-delusion and the projection of imagination, especially among those who actively seek revelation. Since revelations are generally in accord with the beliefs, culture and temperament of those who receive them, it is very difficult to distinguish the true from the false. Indeed, since the individual mind of the visionary is clearly a part of the revelatory process, whatever its source may be, there may be no clear distinction between the true and the false. What is true to one person may not be true to another. Julian of Norwich, for instance, records a sequence of revelations or visions, which include the passion of Christ in which she sees blood rolling copiously down his head:

All the time he was showing these things to my inward sight, I still seemed to see with my actual eyes the continual bleeding of his head. Great drops of blood rolled down from the garland like beads, seemingly from the veins; and they came down a brownish red colour – for the blood was thick – and as they spread out they became bright red, and when they reached his eyebrows they vanished. Nonetheless, the bleeding continued for all the time that there were things for me to see and understand. They were as fresh and living as though they were real: their abundance like the drops of water that fall from the eaves after a heavy shower, falling so thickly that no one can possibly count them; their roundness as they spread out on his forehead like the scales of herring. I was reminded of these three things at the time: round beads as the blood flowed, round herring scales as it spread out, and raindrops from the eaves for their abundance.

This revelation was real and lifelike, horrifying and dreadful, sweet and lovely. The greatest comfort I received from it was to know that our God and Lord, so holy and awesome, is so unpretentious and considerate. This filled me with comfort and assurance.

*Julian of Norwich, Revelations of Divine Love 7; cf. RDL pp.71–72*

Her other experiences include revelations concerning the nature of sin; concerning prayer; the loving and forgiving nature of God; a brief experience of great spiritual happiness followed by a sense of loneliness, depression and the utter futility of life; a vision of Christ in which he reveals the reasons for his suffering on the cross; a vision of Christ's mother; and so on. It was also revealed to her that God is at the centre of everything:

I saw the whole Godhead concentrated as it were in a single point, and thereby I learnt that He is in all things. . . . And He is with us in our soul, eternally indwelling, guiding and keeping us.

*Julian of Norwich, Revelations of Divine Love 11, 52, RDL pp.80, 152*

She also realizes that the "soul could never rest until it comes to Him, and knows Him to be fullness of joy, friendly and considerate, blessed, and life indeed."<sup>1</sup>

From the descriptions she provides of her rational and emotional responses, it would seem that during these experiences her normal mental faculties were active, and she was somewhat of an observer to her sequence of revelations and visions, which took place over a matter of a few hours at a time when she was sick, and which became the basis of her well-known book:

The first of the fifteen revelations began early in the morning, about four o'clock, and they went steadily on in regular and due order until it was past nine. . . . The following night our good Lord showed me the sixteenth revelation. . . . And this sixteenth concluded and confirmed all the previous fifteen.

*Julian of Norwich, Revelations of Divine Love 65–66, RDL pp.180–81*

During her final vision concerning the soul's inherently high estate, which affirms that the Trinity lives eternally within the soul, Julian of Norwich feels that she has been brought to an understanding that although the visions will pass, the positive effect on her faith will endure. Even so, later that same day she confides to a visiting priest that she has been "raving". The priest, however, takes her visions seriously, and she subsequently repents of her "flippant speech".<sup>2</sup>

Many other mystics, Christian and otherwise, have received revelations and visions of a similar nature, though the content is wide and varied. Some receive revelatory confirmations of their religious beliefs, such as the nature of the Trinity, the divine Word, or the passion of Christ; others have visions

of angels and the heavenly realms within; others gain understanding of the universal presence of God in creation and in the soul; some see something of the hidden workings of creation, and how things happen in the material world; some see future events, including the time and nature of their own death. Some revelations seem to be more of an intellectual or even emotional nature; some, such as revelations concerning the future, are perhaps of a more psychic nature; others are more clearly mystical or visionary, having their origins in a heightened consciousness, often tempered by the psychology of the individual.

Revelations need not be of a dramatic nature. Jean-Pierre de Caussade observes that awareness of the divine presence is a subtle and “continual revelation”:

This discovery of divine action in everything that happens, each moment, is the most subtle wisdom possible regarding the ways of God in this life. It is a continual revelation, an ever renewed communion with Him. It is joy in the Beloved, not in secrecy or stealth behind closed doors or in drunken stupor, but openly in public, without fear of anyone or anything. It is a fount of peace, joy, and love; of contentment in God, seen, known, experienced, and perfecting all that happens every moment.

*J.-P. de Caussade, Sacrament of the Present Moment 10, SPM p.114*

Aware of the activity of the individual mind in revelatory experience and in the consequent attempt to sift the true from the false, many writers in the Christian tradition have discussed how to distinguish God-given revelations from those engendered by the devil. Writing about St Teresa, Pedro Ibanez says:

If we doubt whether or not some revelation, or some marvel which we hear of about a person, is of God or not, the fact that such a person lives in great Christian perfection is a very relevant argument. Many have laboured hard to discover signs by which it may be known if what seems to be a good spirit is so, and if a revelation which appears to come from heaven is really from God. Yet, despite all their teaching on the subject, complete certainty is not possible, and even those who have known all the ways there are of deciding upon the matter have often fallen into error. . . . Although this teaching and our natural powers of reason are aids towards this end, they are insufficient to justify us in definitely disapproving and condemning such wonderful things.

*Pedro Ibanez, On the Spirit of St Teresa; cf. in CWTA3 pp.318–19*

Father Ibanez goes on to consider such factors as to whether recipients exhibit an enduring humility and an increased consciousness of their human frailty, a greater desire for prayer and for the inner life, a virtuous nature and

a love of God, a sincere quest to understand the nature of their experiences by consulting those wiser than themselves in such matters, and so forth. Of course, in Christianity, any revelation that contravenes Christian doctrine is regarded as false.<sup>3</sup>

John of the Cross speaks of two kinds of revelation: intellectual and mystical. “The first kind,” he says, “cannot strictly be called revelations.” The second, however, consist of the revelation of hidden mysteries. These may be entirely spiritual, such as, “the revelation of the mystery of the most holy Trinity and unity of God”; or they may concern the works of God. Such revelations include everything from the articles of Christian faith, to prophecies concerning the future, as well as personal knowledge such as the time and manner of one’s death.<sup>4</sup> Of the latter kind, St John writes:

God gives them in many ways and manners, sometimes by word alone, sometimes by signs and figures alone, and by images and similitudes alone, sometimes in more than one way at once, as is likewise to be seen in the prophets, particularly throughout the *Apocalypse*.<sup>5</sup>

*John of the Cross, Ascent of Mount Carmel 2:27.1, CWJCI p.191*

Since, in the latter kind, a person’s mind is clearly involved, St John observes:

In this kind of revelation, the devil may meddle freely. For, as revelations of this nature come ordinarily through words, figures and similitudes, *etc.*, the devil may very readily counterfeit others like them, much more so than when the revelations are in spirit alone.

*John of the Cross, Ascent of Mount Carmel 2:27.3, CWJCI p.192*

St John, like St Teresa and many others, goes on to discuss how to distinguish the true from the false.

The desire to see and hear things within is characteristic of spiritual seekers, whatever their beliefs, as a result of which it is possible that they may become victims of their own mental projections. Sometimes truth, belief and imagination are all mixed up together. Even St Paul writes with evident exasperation to his converts in Corinth, who appear to be holding some lively meetings, with many of those present speaking in “tongues” that no one else understands, or contributing something of a ‘revelatory’ or ‘prophetic’ nature. Prophecy, here, means speaking in an ‘inspired’ manner:

At all your meetings, let everyone be ready with a psalm or a sermon or a revelation (*apokalypsis*), or ready to use his gift of tongues or to give an interpretation; but it must always be for the common good. If there are people present with the gift of tongues, let only two or three, at the most, be allowed to use it, and only one at a time, and there must be someone to translate. If there is no translator present, they must

keep quiet in church and speak only to themselves and to God. As for prophets, let two or three of them speak, and the others listen to them. If one of the listeners receives a revelation (*apokalypsis*), then the man who is already speaking should stop. For you can all prophesy in turn, so that everybody will learn something and everybody will be encouraged. Prophets can always control their prophetic spirits, for God is not a God of confusion, but of peace.

*1 Corinthians 14:26–33; cf. JB*

In the attempt to rein in the imagination and to introduce some realism into the quest for spiritual experiences, Jean-Pierre de Caussade asks, “What use is the most sublime enlightenment and divine revelation if we do not love the will of God?”<sup>6</sup> Walter Hilton similarly feels that pure love for Christ is of more value than mystical experiences, including “visions and revelations of angels”:

I would rather feel in my heart a true and pure desire for my Lord Jesus Christ, although I had very little spiritual knowledge of Him, than perform all the bodily penances of all men living, or enjoy visions and revelations of angels, hear sweet sounds, or experience any other pleasurable outward sensations were they unaccompanied by this desire. In short, all the joys of heaven and earth would have no attraction for me unless I might also have this desire for Jesus.

*Walter Hilton, Ladder of Perfection 1:47, LPH p.58*

Hilton also adds that revelations are not to be confused with contemplation:

Visions or revelations by spirits, whether seen in bodily form or in the imagination, and whether in sleeping or waking, do not constitute true contemplation.

*Walter Hilton, Ladder of Perfection 1:10, LPH p.10*

Drawing on the Bible as well as his own understanding, Isaac of Nineveh has much to say on the subject. “Scripture,” he writes, “mentions six kinds of revelations”:

The first: that by senses; the second: by psychic sight; the third: by rapture of the spirit; the fourth: by the rank of prophecy; the fifth: in some intellectual way; the sixth: as it were by a dream.

*Isaac of Nineveh, Treatises 19, On Revelations, MTIN p.106*

An example of the first, he says, is Moses and the burning bush;<sup>7</sup> he then goes on to give instances of each kind from the many biblical stories concerning the Hebrew prophets and the apostles of Jesus. Paul’s experience of being “caught up to the third heaven”,<sup>8</sup> he describes as a revelation of the spirit.<sup>9</sup>

But all revelations, he maintains, have one feature in common, which he summarizes in a quote from an unknown source, “Revelation is silence of intellect.” He goes on to point out that no one has truly found knowledge by zealous thought and effort, but by “spiritual power, so that he to whom the revelation is imparted, at that time is not aware of any thought, . . . nor of those things which present themselves to his senses”.<sup>10</sup>

See also: **inspiration, prophet (7.1), visions.**

1. Julian of Norwich, *Revelations of Divine Love* 26, *RDL* p.102.
2. Julian of Norwich, *Revelations of Divine Love* 66–70, *RDL* pp.181–87.
3. Pedro Ibanez, *On the Spirit of St Teresa*, in *CWTA3* pp.318–26.
4. John of the Cross, *Ascent of Mount Carmel* 2:25–27, *CWJCI* pp.181–94.
5. *I.e. Book of Revelation.*
6. J.-P. de Caussade, *Sacrament of the Present Moment* 10, *SPM* p.112.
7. *Exodus* 3:2–5.
8. *2 Corinthians* 12:2–4, KJV.
9. Isaac of Nineveh, *Treatises* 19, *On Revelations*, *MTIN* p.107.
10. Isaac of Nineveh, *Treatises* 19, *On Revelations*, *MTIN* p.105.

**rig pa** (T) *Lit.* knowledge; in general usage, the standard translation of *vidyā* (S); in the *atiyoga* and *Dzogchen* traditions of the Tibetan *Nyingma* school of Buddhism, the primordial, pristine mind or awareness that is regarded as the foundation of all mind, all consciousness, and all phenomena; intrinsic awareness of the nature of mind; the ‘wisdom-mind’ of the *buddhas*; non-dual awareness; pure gnosis, the inherent and natural ground of all consciousness and cognition, without which there is no consciousness.

According to *Dzogchen* and *atiyoga* teaching, *rig pa* is the primordial, inherent *buddha*-nature of all sentient beings that has always existed independent of everything and yet permeates everything. It is the state of mind of all the *buddhas*. It transcends all boundaries of time, space, duality, existence, and nonexistence. It is infinite and has always existed, beyond space and time. It is complete liberation, freedom, and total knowledge. *Rig pa* cannot be comprehended by intellectual or rational processes; its energy is intuitive knowledge of the Truth. Nothing could have come into existence or could continue to exist without *rig pa*. *Rig pa* brought the universe and everything that exists into being; without it there would be no consciousness and no awareness. *Rig pa* is the foundation from which *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa* have come into being as its reflections, and it illumines both.

In the *Dzogchen* way of thinking, *rig pa* is both the goal of the path and the path itself. In fact, early *Dzogchen* texts teach that all practice entails effort, which results in delusion. Meditation should therefore consist of simply



recognizing the pure, luminous (*'od gsal*) and empty (*stong pa*) condition of one's own innate awareness. Later *Dzogchen*, however, influenced by Indian tantrism, introduced other meditational practices, such as meditation on light and darkness, as well as the more traditional tantric practices concerning the control of the body's subtle life energies (*prāṇa*).

See also: **bardo** (8.3), **Dzogchen** (8.5), **vidyā**.

**rōshin** (J) *Lit.* old (*rō*) mind (*shin*); elder's mind, parental mind; nurturing mind; the selfless and caring attitude of a parent for a child; in a wider sense, an attitude of care and kindness towards everything and everyone in life; an attitude of loving generosity without expecting anything in return, applied to the performance of any task, great or small; from *rōba shinsetsu* (grand-mother kindness).

Speaking of the ideal cook, Dōgen Zenji (1200–1253), founder of the *Sōtō* school of *Zen* Buddhism, writes in his *Eihei shingi* ('Dōgen's Rules of Purity') of three essential mental attitudes: *kishin* (joyful mind), *daishin* (great mind), and *rōshin*. Of *rōshin*, he writes:

(The) elder's mind (*rōshin*) is the spirit of fathers and mothers. It is, for example, like a father and mother who dote on an only child: one's thoughts of the three jewels (the Buddha, the *Dharma*, and the *sangha* or Buddhist community) are like their concentration on that one child. Even if they are poor or desperate, they strongly love and nurture that single child. People who are outsiders cannot understand what their state of mind is like; they can only understand it when they themselves become fathers or mothers. Without regard for their own poverty or wealth, (parents) earnestly turn their thoughts toward raising their child. Without regard for whether they themselves are cold or hot, they shade the child or cover the child. We may regard this as affectionate thinking at its most intense. A person who arouses this spirit is fully conscious of it. A person who cultivates this spirit is one who truly awakens to it. Therefore, when (the cook) watches over water and watches over grain, in every case he should sustain the caring and warmth of child-rearing!

The great teacher Shākyamuni (the Buddha), moreover, apportioned twenty years of his lifespan as a *buddha* to assist us in this age of the end of the *dharma*. What was his intention? It was simply that he valued the spirit of fathers and mothers. A *tathāgata* (*buddha*) is utterly incapable of seeking any reward or seeking any riches.

*Eihei Dōgen, Eihei shingi, ESED*

See also: **daishin**, **kishin**.

**ruah ha-kodesh, ruah kodshekha, ruah kodsho** (He) *Lit.* spirit (*ruah*) of holiness (*ha-kodesh*); the holy spirit; Your holy (*kodshekha*) spirit; His (*kodsho*) holy spirit; the inspirational aspect of God; the power by which God manifests to His devotees and prophets. *Ruah* means ‘soul’, ‘spirit’, ‘wind’ or ‘breath’, and is related to the word *re’ah* (fragrance). In this sense, *ruah ha-kodesh* could be translated as ‘divine inspiration’, since ‘breath’ and ‘inspiration’ have essentially the same metaphorical meaning.

It is generally said in Jewish literature that the will of God revealed itself to the biblical prophets as the *ruah ha-kodesh*. However, the term itself only appears at two places in the Hebrew Bible and then only in grammatical forms that use a possessive pronoun. *Ruah* (spirit), in contrast, occurs numerous times on its own, as does *kodesh* (holiness).

In the book of *Genesis*, at the first moment of creation, it is the *Ruah* of God that hovers over the waters, that divides light from darkness.<sup>1</sup> Here, the *Ruah* is the creative power or energy of the Divine.

In the writings of the prophet Joel (c.C9th–C5th BCE), on the other hand, *ruah* is the spiritual inspiration that is bestowed upon human beings as divine grace:

And it shall come to pass afterwards,  
that I will pour out my spirit (*ruah*) upon all flesh,  
and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy.  
Your old men shall dream dreams,  
your young men shall see visions:  
And also upon the servants  
and upon the handmaids in those days  
will I pour out my spirit (*ruah*).

*Joel 3:1–2, KB*

In the only two places where the ‘holy spirit’ appears in the Bible – in *Isaiah* and *Psalms* – it could mean either the divine inspiration or the creative power or both, although in fact they come to the same thing. God’s creative outpouring is His means of conveying inspiration. In *Isaiah*, according to a psalm that speaks of God’s attempts to save his “people”:

But they rebelled, and vexed His holy spirit (*ruah kodsho*); therefore He turned to become their enemy and He fought against them. Then He remembered the days of old, of Moses and his people, saying: “Where is He that brought them up out of the sea with the shepherds of his flock? Where is He who put His holy spirit (*ruah kodsho*) within him (Moses)?”

*Isaiah 63:10–11, JCL*

In psalm 51, the psalmist prays that his own spirit be made strong and steadfast through the support of “Your holy spirit (*ruaḥ kodshekha*)”, through a constant awareness of the divine presence:

Create in me a clean heart, O God,  
and renew a steadfast spirit (*ruaḥ nakhon*) within me.  
Cast me not away from Your presence,  
and take not Your holy spirit (*ruaḥ kodshekha*) from me.  
Restore unto me the joy of Your salvation,  
and support me with a willing spirit (*ruaḥ nedivah*).

*Psalms 51:12–14; cf. KB*

It is from these two instances that the rabbinic *ruaḥ ha-kodesh* has come into use. In the *Talmud* and *Midrash*, *ruaḥ ha-kodesh* appears frequently as the source of prophetic and spiritual inspiration, sometimes depicted as a level of spiritual attainment. Rabbi Hillel (C1st BCE – C1st CE), for instance, is revered as one who had merited the *ruaḥ ha-kodesh*, and there are many accounts concerning his attentiveness to the welfare of his soul.<sup>2</sup> One of the *baraitas* (supplementary *mishnahs*, biblical commentaries) concerning Hillel says that he “is worthy of God’s presence, the *Shekhinah*, to rest on him; this also means the gift of prophecy.”<sup>3</sup> The same *baraita* also relates a story concerning Samuel the Small, a disciple of Hillel’s, dubbed ‘the Small’ because he made himself humble. One day, when he was sitting with some fellow scholars, “he was designated by a heavenly voice as the only one worthy of the holy spirit (*ruaḥ ha-kodesh*),” although there were many more of Hillel’s disciples who were said to be worthy of the *ruaḥ ha-kodesh*. The *Avot de-Rabbi Nathan* (‘Sayings of Rabbi Nathan’) maintains that thirty of his eighty disciples had reached that degree of spiritual evolution.<sup>4</sup>

According to the second-century (CE) Rabbi Pinḥas ben Ya’ir, spiritual evolution can be understood as a ‘ladder of saintliness’. On this ‘ladder’, *ruaḥ ha-kodesh* is the highest goal attainable by a human being, prior to “revival (resurrection) of the dead”. In a passage frequently quoted in Jewish spiritual literature, Pinḥas observes:

The pursuit of *Torah* leads to vigilance, vigilance leads to zeal, zeal leads to cleansing, cleansing leads to restraint, restraint leads to purity, purity leads to piety, piety leads to humility, humility leads to the fear of sin, the fear of the sin leads to holiness (*kedushah*), holiness leads to the holy spirit (*ruaḥ ha-kodesh*), and the holy spirit (*ruaḥ ha-kodesh*) leads to the revival of the dead, and the revival of the dead comes through Elijah, of blessed memory.

*Rabbi Pinḥas ben Ya’ir, in Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Nashim, Sotah 9:15; cf. in JMT pp.170–71, LTHB p.253*

The twelfth-century Jewish philosopher Moses Maimonides also speaks of various degrees of spiritual evolution, beginning with purification of the mind of all worldly matters, seeking always to find God (“the throne of glory”), and reaching upward to become “worthy of the holy spirit (*ruah ha-kodesh*)”. At this point, he says, he has entered the heavenly realms, the “level of angels”:

An individual having all the necessary qualifications can delve into the mysteries (*pardes*), advancing in these deep, subtle concepts and gaining a firm understanding and perception of them. At the same time, he must also sanctify himself and separate himself from the ways of the masses, who grope in the darkness of the times. He must achieve constant diligence in not even thinking of non-essentials or considering the current vanities and intrigues.

Such a person must work on himself until his mind is constantly clear and directed on high. He must bind his mind (*da'at*) to the throne of glory, striving to comprehend the purity and holiness of the transcendental. He must furthermore contemplate on the wisdom of God in each thing, understanding its true significance, whether it be the highest spiritual entity or the lowest thing on earth. The individual who does this immediately becomes worthy of *ruah ha-kodesh*.

When he attains this spirit (*ruah*), his soul becomes bound up on the level of angels, . . . and he becomes a completely different person. He can now understand things with a knowledge completely different than anything that he ever experienced previously. The level that he has attained is far above that of other men, who can merely use their mind (*da'at*). This is the meaning of what (the prophet Samuel told) King Saul, “(The spirit of God (*ruah Yahweh*) shall descend upon you), you shall prophesy with them, and you shall be transformed into a different man.”<sup>5</sup>

*Moses Maimonides, Mishneh Torah, Hilkhhot Yesodei ha-Torah 7:1; cf. in MBAK p.22*

The early kabbalists and other mystics of the twelfth century regarded the holy spirit (*ruah ha-kodesh*), the “glory” of God (*kavod*), and the divine presence or radiance (*Shekhinah*) as one and the same thing. The twentieth-century scholar Gershom Scholem quotes Judah he-Hasid of Regensburg (1140–1217), who is commenting on Saadia Gaon’s (891–941) commentary on the *Sefer Yeẓirah*:

God, who remains infinite and unknown also in the role of creator, has produced the glory as “a created light, the first of all creations”. This *kavod* (glory) is “the great radiance called *Shekhinah*”, and it is also identical with the *ruah ha-kodesh*, the holy spirit, out of whom

there speaks the voice and word of God. This primeval light of divine glory is later revealed to the prophets and mystics.

*Gershom Scholem, Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism, MTGS p.111*

In the Kabbalah, *ruah ha-kodesh* designates a high degree of spiritual attainment, and the purpose of the kabbalists' spiritual practices was to draw the *ruah ha-kodesh* upon them. Isaac Luria (1534–1572) taught that in order to enjoy the divine abundance and radiance, it was necessary to perform the *miẓvot* (commandments) with an attitude of joyfulness. His disciple Ḥayyim Vital (1543–1642), in the introduction to his *Sha'ar ha-Miẓvot* ('Gate of the Commandments'), writes that, according to his master, "the amount of 'the supernal light (*aur elyon*) and the inspiration of the holy spirit (*ruah ha-kodesh*)' that performance of the *miẓvot* evokes were 'in direct proportion to one's degree of joyfulness (*simḥa*).'"<sup>6</sup>

In another of his works, *Sha'arei Kedushah* ('Gates of Holiness'), in a section on *ruah ha-kodesh*, which he designates as the seventh gate or step on the spiritual path, Vital speaks of kabbalist practices by which the *ruah ha-kodesh* can manifest. The "road leading to enlightenment", he begins, is not easy; nonetheless, an "initiate" should not give up, because it is the way to become "worthy of (to experience) *ruah ha-kodesh*":

In the previous gate, we have warned the initiate regarding the pitfalls that lie in the road leading to enlightenment. Still, he should not give up. Commenting on the verse, "Deborah was a prophetess,"<sup>7</sup> the prophet Elijah taught his disciples, "I call heaven and earth to witness that whether it be a heathen or a Jew, . . . a man or a woman, a manservant or a maidservant, the holy spirit (*ruah ha-kodesh*) will suffuse each of them in keeping with the deeds he or she performs."<sup>8</sup>

Our own eyes have seen and our own ears have heard distinguished individuals who have attained the level of *ruah ha-kodesh*, even in our times. Some of these individuals can predict the future. Others have mastered wisdom that had never been revealed to previous generations.

In order that those who wish to enter the sanctuary not be discouraged, I will explain a few concepts, opening the door like the eye of a needle. "For God will not withhold good from those who walk uprightly (with purity)."<sup>9</sup> First, I will explain a few general principles involving enlightenment. Then, in the eighth gate, I will discuss a number of specific practices.

*Ḥayyim Vital, Sha'arei Kedushah 3:7, SKHV, SKHZ p.61; cf. in MKAK pp.194–95*

The first step is repentance for sin, fasting, nightly vigils and meditation by forming a mental image of the letters of the tetragrammaton *YHWH* (*Yahweh*), the four-letter name of God:

The best way of all is that taught by Elijah. This was the way of the early saints (*hasidim rishonim*), also known as the Pharisees. The technique is as follows:

One must first repent every sin he has ever done, rectifying all the spiritual damage he has caused. He must then perfect his soul through keeping the positive commandments, as well as through complete concentration in prayer and diligent *Torah* study without ulterior motive. He must continue like an ox under its yoke, until the physical becomes weak. This should also include such disciplines as minimizing the amount of food one eats, waking up at midnight, shunning all unworthy traits, separating oneself from other people, and not speaking unnecessary words. One must also constantly purify his body through immersion in the *mikvah* (ritual pool or tank).

After this, one should meditate (*hitboded*) occasionally on the fear of God. He should mentally depict the letters of the tetragrammaton. At this time, he should be careful to keep his thoughts away from all worldly vanities, binding himself to the love of God with great passion.

*Hayyim Vital, Sha'arei Kedushah 3:7, SKHV, SKHZ p.61, in MKAK p.195*

Vital then mentions several ways in which the *ruah ha-kodesh* can manifest, which he lists from the highest to the lowest. The highest is the revelation of the divine light within his soul. Below that is the revelation of an angel or channel (*maggid*) that comes about with *Torah* study or observance of the commandments. The third is experience of the revelation of the prophet Elijah, traditionally regarded as the source of inner divine revelation. The fourth, which he says is actually higher than the previous two, is the revelation of the soul of a past mystic or saint: through him they attain knowledge of the higher wisdom and mysteries of the *Torah*. The fifth and lowest level is the experience of dreams where a person learns of the future and attains other esoteric knowledge:

Through this, one can be worthy of *ruah ha-kodesh* in one of the following aspects:

The first aspect consists of a transmission to the individual's soul of the highest light, from the Root of the highest levels of his soul. Such a revelation is *ruah ha-kodesh* in its purest form.

The second aspect comes about through the study of *Torah* or observance of some commandment. Our sages taught, "When a person keeps a commandment, he earns an advocate (angel)."<sup>10</sup> This actually means that an angel is created through one's actions. If this individual does this consistently according to the law, with great *kavanah* (concentration), then this angel will reveal itself to him. This is the meaning of those angels called *maggidim* (channels) which are

mentioned in various writings. But if the commandment is not kept according to the law, then this angel will be made up of good and evil, combining truth and falsehood.

The third aspect is that as a result of one's piety, Elijah will reveal himself to him. The greater one's piety, the greater will be his enlightenment.

The fourth aspect is greater than (the previous two). This involves the revelation of the soul of a *zaddik* (saint), who has already passed away. . . . This aspect can come about through the proper observance of a commandment, just like the previous aspects. People who are worthy of this attain a level where they gain knowledge of high wisdom and the hidden mysteries of the *Torah*. This, too, depends on one's deeds.

The fifth aspect is the lowest of them all. This involves dreams where the future and other knowledge is revealed to the individual. This is also close to *ruaḥ ha-kodesh*.

*Ḥayyim Vital, Sha'arei Kedushah 3:7, SKHV, SKHZ pp.61–62, in MKAK pp.195–96*

Vital adds that there is a straight path to the highest levels of the spirit if a person performs good deeds, practises holy living, and does not indulge in any negative practices such as oaths and charms (forms of magic prevalent at the time). If a person remains on the positive path, he will have a pure experience of the holy spirit, the *ruaḥ ha-kodesh*:

The method discussed earlier brings one on a straight path. The individual does not use mystical oaths (charms) to bind the supernal beings, but only resorts to the power of his good deeds and sanctification of the self. He can then be assured that the *ruaḥ ha-kodesh* that he attains will be pure, without any admixture of evil whatsoever.

*Ḥayyim Vital, Sha'arei Kedushah 3:7, SKHV, SKHZ p.62, in MKAK p.196*

See also: **ruaḥ** (5.1), **Ruaḥ ha-Kodesh** (3.1).

1. *Genesis* 1:2.
2. See Yitzhak Buxbaum, *Life and Teachings of Hillel*, *LTHB* pp.248–55.
3. *Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Baraita Sotah* 48b, in *JPPB* p.55.
4. See *Avot de-Rabbi Nathan* A:14, B:28, in *LTHB* pp.251, 265.
5. *1 Samuel* 10:6.
6. Lawrence Fine, on Ḥayyim Vital, *Sha'ar ha-Mizvot, Introduction*, *SMHV* p.3, in *PSHC* p.193.
7. *Judges* 4:4.
8. *Seder Eliyahu Rabbah*, *SERM* p.48, *TBEE* pp.112–13.
9. *Psalms* 84:11.
10. *Babylonian Talmud, Mishnah Avot* 4:13.

**sabīja samādhi** (S) See **nirbīja samādhi**.

**sacca-ñāṇa** (Pa), **satya-jñāna** (S) *Lit.* knowledge (*ñāṇa*) of truth (*sacca*); in Buddhism, wisdom or understanding of the four noble truths (*ariya-sacca*), which are: suffering (*dukkha*) is universally prevalent; the origin of suffering is craving (*taṇhā*); there can be an end to suffering; and the way to end suffering is by following the noble eightfold path (*āryāṣṭāṅga-mārga*).

Knowledge of the truth is said to be of two kinds:

1. *Anubodha-ñāṇa*. Knowledge comprised of conceptual understanding (*anubodha*); mundane (*lokiya*) or worldly knowledge; knowledge derived from others, hearsay, secondhand knowledge.
2. *Paṭivedha-ñāṇa*. Knowledge comprised of penetration (*paṭivedha*); transcendental or supramundane (*lokuttara*) knowledge, mystical realization, gnosis. One who develops this kind of knowledge simultaneously comprehends the intrinsic reality behind all four noble truths.

*Sacca-ñāṇa* is one of three aspects of knowledge regarding each of the four noble truths. These three aspects are:

1. *Sacca-ñāṇa*. Knowledge that it is the truth.
2. *Kicca-ñāṇa*. Knowledge of work or duty (*kicca*); knowledge that certain practices and obligations regarding this truth are to be performed.
3. *Kata-ñāṇa*. Knowledge of fulfilment (*kata*); knowledge that the required practices and duties regarding this truth have been fulfilled.

By applying these three aspects of knowledge to each of the four noble truths, twelve modes of knowledge are enumerated.<sup>1</sup>

The *Mahāyāna* Buddhist philosopher Nāgārjuna (c. 150–250) lists *satya-jñāna* as characteristic of the morality of the third of the four categories of virtuous layperson. It arises out of a mind one-pointed in aspiration towards attainment of *nirvāṇa*. Such a person

observes morality (*śīla*) in order to reach *nirvāṇa*, to know the universal impermanence (*anityatā*) of all *dharma*s, to escape from suffering and to enjoy the unconditioned (*asaṃskṛita*) eternally. Besides, the moral man has no regret; having no regret, he acquires joy (*mudītā*); having joy, he acquires one-pointedness of mind (*ekachitta*); having one-pointedness of mind, he acquires true knowledge (*satya-jñāna*); having true knowledge, he experiences indifference (*nirveda-chitta*)



(to the world); feeling this indifference, he acquires renunciation (*vairāgya*); having renunciation, he acquires deliverance (*vimoksha*); having deliverance, he reaches *nirvāṇa*: thus morality is the root of all good *dharmas* (*sarva-kushala-dharma-mūla*). Finally, morality is the gateway (*āyatana*) of entry into the eightfold Buddhist path (*āryāṣṭāṅga-mārga*); by working with it, one necessarily arrives at *nirvāṇa*.

*Nāgārjuna, Mahāprajñāpāramitā Śāstra 22.2.1, T25 1509:160c; cf. TVW2 p.657*

See also: **jñāna**.

1. *E.g. Saṃyutta Nikāya 56:11, Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta, PTS5 pp.422–23.*

**sahaj(a)**, **sahaj avasthā**, **sahaj gati** (S/H/Pu), **sahaj(a) samādhi** (S/H), **sahj** (Pu), **lhan skyes** (T), **jùshēngqǐ** (C), **kushōki** (J) *Lit.* born or produced (*ja*, *shēng*) together with (*saha*, *jù*); natural, innate (*jùshēngqǐ*), hereditary, congenital; natural (*sahaja*) state (*avasthā*, *gati*) or disposition; peaceful absorption (*samādhi*); hence, real, spontaneous, easy, peaceful, contented state; esoterically, the state of blissful ease and contentment attained by meditation; the state of true mystic beatitude, supreme bliss, equanimity, peace, blessedness, or holiness; the natural or native state of the pure soul, unencumbered by the mind; the transcendent condition of mystic peace and beatitude attained by the soul when it rises above the regions of the mind, reaching its culmination in eternity; that state of meditation and spiritual consciousness in which the soul, having realized its own true nature, gravitates easily and naturally towards complete merging in God.

The *Haṭha Yoga Pradīpikā* maintains that the way to liberation and *sahaj avasthā* is by awakening the “great power” (*i.e. kuṇḍalinī*) through *rāja yoga*, with the help of a true *guru* (*sadguru*):

Who really knows the greatness of *rāja yoga*? Realization (*jñāna*), liberation (*mukti*), balance (*sthiti*) and perfection (*siddhi*) can only be attained by instruction from a *guru*.

Without the grace of the true *guru* (*sadguru*), indifference to worldly pleasures, realization of the Truth and *sahaj avasthā* are all impossible to attain.

When the great power (*mahāshakti*) is awakened by the various *āsanas* (postures) and different *kumbhakas* (‘potlike’, forms of breath control), then the *prāṇa* becomes absorbed in the *śūnya* (void).

In the *yogī* whose *shakti* (power) has awakened, and whose remaining *karmas* have been surmounted, *sahaj avasthā* spontaneously arises.

*Haṭha Yoga Pradīpikā 4:8–11; cf. HPSPD pp.130–31, HYP p.48*

According to a number of Indian *sants* (saints), the true and natural state (*sahaj avasthā*) of the soul begins in the purely spiritual region above the realms of the universal mind – known as *par Brahm* (beyond *Brahm*), *daswān dwār* (tenth door), and *sunṇ* (void) – and reaches its culmination in *sach khand* (true home, eternity).

The three worlds of the mind (physical, astral, causal) are characterized by incessant movement and activity. Although great bliss is experienced by the ascending soul, the highest peace and bliss cannot be experienced while the soul is tied to the ever-shifting mind and its multitudinous ramifications. Similarly, the highest contentment – utter acceptance and submission – cannot be attained while in the realms of the mind. True *sahaj avasthā*, therefore, is only attained when the soul rises above all aspects of the mind and reaches eternity.

Guru Arjun writes that the state of *sahj* begins beyond the realm of the three *guṇas* (attributes) that prevail throughout the mind regions. But this state is only known to the *gurumukhs*, to advanced mystics:

In the three qualities (*triḥ guṇā*), *sahaj* is not obtained:  
the three qualities (*traī guṇ*) lead to delusion and doubt. . . .  
In the fourth state, there is *sahj*: the *gurumukhs* gather it in.

*Guru Amardās, Ādi Granth 68, AGK*

And:

How may I meet my master, the king, the lord of the universe?  
Is there any saint (*sant*)  
who can bestow such *sahj sukh* (peace and bliss),  
and show me the way to Him? . . .  
*Sahj* is attained in an instant, and doubt is dispelled:  
meeting him, my light merges in the Light.

*Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 204–5, AGK*

Kabīr says that it is a state of complete absorption (*sunṇ samādh*):

There is no rainy season, ocean, sunshine or shade,  
no creation or destruction there.  
No life or death, no pain or pleasure is felt there.  
There is only . . . *sunṇ samādh* and no duality.  
The description of *sahj* is indescribable and sublime.  
It is not measured, and it is not exhausted.  
It is neither light nor heavy.

Neither lower nor upper worlds are there;  
Neither day nor night are there.

There is no water, wind, or fire;  
There, the true *guru* is contained.

The inaccessible and unfathomable Lord  
dwells there within Himself:  
By *guru*'s grace, He is found.

*Kabīr, Ādi Granth 333, AGK*

And again:

Enrapturing indeed, O holy men, is the state of *sahaj samādhi*;  
From the day this state was realized with the grace of the master,  
it takes me higher and higher every day.  
I am so absorbed in it that wherever I walk,  
I seem to be circumambulating him,  
and whatever I do, I seem to be in service to him.  
When I sleep, I seem to prostrate myself before him;  
I worship no other god. . . .

Since my mind has been attuned to the ceaseless Sound,  
all impure tendencies have fled.  
Whether rising or sitting, it (the sound) leaves me not,  
such is my absorption in him.  
This is the way of living in a transcendent state of mind (*unmanī*),  
which I have openly revealed to you.  
Says Kabīr, I am merged into that supreme state,  
which is above and beyond pleasure and pain.

*Kabīr, Shabdāvalī 1, Virah aur prem, Shabd 30, KSS1 p.16*

Guru Arjun concludes:

The One who sent you has now recalled you:  
return to your home now in *sukh sahj* (bliss and peace).

*Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 678, AGK*

*Sahaja* is also used extensively in tantric Buddhist texts composed by North Indian *mahāsiddhas* such as Saraha (c.C8th), Kāṇha (c.C7th–8th), and Tilopa (988–1069). In this context, *sahaja* generally refers both to one's true and essential nature as also to its realization. Among *yoginī tantras* such as the *Hevajra Tantra*, *sahajānanda* refers to the highest of four levels of bliss (*ānanda*).<sup>1</sup>

1. See "sahaja," *Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, PDB.

**saḥq** (A/P) *Lit.* rubbing, grinding, pulverization; in Sufism, the grinding down of the ego; obliteration or annihilation of the self; more or less synonymous with *fanā'* (annihilation) and other similar terms such as *maḥw* (effacement), *maḥq* (obliteration), and *tams* (extinction). The metaphor is drawn from that of a blunt or rusty knife that is held against a grindstone until sharp again, or from a medieval mirror made of steel, which needs rubbing, polishing and burnishing before it can produce a clear reflection.

Some Sufi systematizers categorize *saḥq* as the pulverization of the devotee's nature through the fire of divine "wrath", by which is meant the overpowering inner manifestation of the might and majesty of the Divine:

Pulverization (*saḥq*) represents the devotee's sense of the obliteration (*dhahāb*) of his own nature (*tarkīb*) when subjected to the wrath of the overpowering of divine manifestation (*tajallī*).

Obliteration (*maḥq*) is higher than pulverization (*saḥq*), representing the annihilation (*fanā'*) of the devotee in God. . . .

Ibn al-ʿArabī maintains that pulverization (*saḥq*) represents the obliteration (*dhahāb*) of one's nature subject to wrath, while obliteration (*maḥq*) represents one's annihilation (*fanā'*) in God Himself.<sup>1</sup>

*Suʿād al-Ḥakīm, al-Muʿjam al-Ṣūfī 571, AMAS p.1015; cf. in SSE12 p.102*

Or as Niʿmat Allāh Valī puts it:

Pulverization (*saḥq*) represents the dissolution of the devotee's nature when subjected to wrath:

The fire of wrath melted the devotees down:  
then God came to caress us with His grace.

*Shāh Niʿmat Allāh Valī, Rasāʾil, RNV4 p.87; cf. in SSE12 pp.101–2*

See also: **fanā'**, **maḥw**.

1. Ibn al-ʿArabī, *Iṣṭilāḥāt al-Ṣūfīyah*, ISMA p.63.

**ṣaḥw** (A/P) *Lit.* sobriety; wakefulness, waking consciousness; in Sufism, a state of balance, control and spiritual maturity in which the ecstasy of divine revelation is comfortably contained; clear, awakened spiritual consciousness. Some Sufis, such as al-Junayd, have held that sobriety (*ṣaḥw*) is a higher state than intoxication (*sukr*). Others, such as Abū Yazīd al-Bisṭāmī, have elevated intoxication above sobriety.

To the spiritually immature, spiritual intoxication (*sukr*) may lead to imbalance of the mental faculties. Rapt in an ecstatic higher consciousness,

the attention can become largely withdrawn from the world. Such a person may perform miracles, ignoring the natural laws of this world, and his behaviour may become inappropriate or even seemingly insane. He may ignore the spiritual rule of *kitmān* (concealment), revealing inner secrets and his inner experiences, which should be kept hidden. In times past, his utterances may have resulted in his execution for heresy, as in the case of Maṣṣūr al-Ḥallāj. Such states of intoxication are usually temporary, and there is a return to sobriety or normal waking consciousness (*ṣaḥw*) after some time.

The sobriety (*ṣaḥw*) of which al-Junayd and others speak is of a different nature. Here, *ṣaḥw* implies the spiritual maturity to be able to digest inwardly the heights of inner bliss, while remaining balanced and outwardly normal, observing the rule of *kitmān*, and giving due respect to the outward forms and rules of normal living.

A conversation recorded by Amīr Ḥasan Sijzī with his master, Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyā', dated May 14th 1308, explains the matter:

... I interjected, "Most of the saints conceal their spiritual states – why is that?"

Replied the master, "If they disclose their secret, they would shift the abode of confidentiality to another person. Suppose someone tells your secret to someone else, and then that person makes it public. Would you ever again divulge a secret to the first person?"

"How is it," I asked, "that Khwājah Abū Sa'īd Abū al-Khayr – may God have mercy upon him – often gave voice to words from the Unseen?"

"At the time that saints are overcome by desire (for God)," explained the master, "due to their intoxication (*sukr*), they say something. But that person who is perfected (*kāmil*) lets out no secrets of any kind." After that a line of verse came twice to his blessed lips:

God's heroes drain a thousand seas – yet thirst.

God's heroes drain a thousand seas – yet thirst.

He then observed that it requires great patience to honour the divine secrets, and those who do are wholly men of sobriety (*ṣaḥw*). "Which is the higher stage," I asked, "the stage of the men of intoxication (*sukr*) or that of the men of sobriety (*ṣaḥw*)?"

"The stage of the men of sobriety (*ṣaḥw*)," replied the master; and God knows best.

Sufis talk of two levels of sobriety: *ṣaḥw al-awwal* (first sobriety), which relates to the rational state of the so-called ordinary, balanced human being, and *ṣaḥw al-thānī* (second sobriety), which is the mystic state:

Intoxication (*sukr*) is a noble state to which two forms of sobriety (*ṣaḥw*) are counterpoised. The first sobriety (*ṣaḥw al-awwal*), which precedes intoxication (*sukr*), is when one is in dispersion and is not regarded as a spiritual state. The sobriety (*ṣaḥw*) that follows intoxication (*sukr*) – the second sobriety (*ṣaḥw al-thānī*) or the concentrated sobriety (*ṣaḥw al-ṣaḥw*) or the sobriety after obliteration (*maḥw*) – is a state that eventually changes into a station and is more precious and prized than intoxication (*sukr*), because it embraces both concentration (*jamʿ*) and dispersion. It is attained only after one has passed beyond intoxication (*sukr*) and concentration.

The first sobriety (*ṣaḥw al-awwal*) is the lowest degree of imperfection, because it serves to reinforce transitoriness, while intoxication (*sukr*) is the elevation of the wayfarer, because it serves to efface transitoriness. . . .

The second sobriety (*ṣaḥw al-thānī*) is the ultimate stage of perfection, because it serves to give reality to eternity, where intoxication (*sukr*) has served to efface transitoriness. The second sobriety (*ṣaḥw al-thānī*) is the result of the contemplative vision (*mushāhadah*) of the beauty of the Eternal, where the light of the Eternal dispels the darkness of transitoriness. Of course, the state of contemplative vision (*shuhūd*) is not lasting at first, flashing briefly and disappearing. Thus, at this stage its light does not dispel the darkness of transient beings permanently, but only for a moment, so that darkness immediately returns. The wayfarer at this stage thus keeps fluctuating between the first sobriety (*ṣaḥw al-awwal*), which reinforces transitoriness, and intoxication (*sukr*), which effaces it. This state is known as fluctuation (*talwīn*). Once contemplative vision has become established, with transitoriness effaced and Eternity becoming real, the wayfarer enters the state known as stability (*tamkīn*), called thus because the experience of it is continuous and lasting, unlike the experience of intoxication (*sukr*), which comes and goes and subjects the wayfarer to fluctuation.

As long as the wayfarer possesses (the sense of individual) being, which engenders the first sobriety (*ṣaḥw al-awwal*), he needs intoxication (*sukr*), until he becomes liberated from the first sobriety (*ṣaḥw al-awwal*). Correspondingly, only when one attains the second sobriety (*ṣaḥw al-thānī*) will one cease to need intoxication (*sukr*).

*Tahānawī, Kashshāf Iṣṭilāḥāt al-Funūn, KIFT2 p.357*

In *ṣūfī* terminology, sobriety (*ṣaḥw*) indicates the departure or breaking up of clouds. Arabs likewise refer to a clear day as a sober one. Thus, one could say that sobriety (*ṣaḥw*) is defined as the removal of the clouds of intoxication (*sukr*) from the skies of the wayfarer's consciousness. Sobriety (*ṣaḥw*) is, hence, a higher state than intoxication (*sukr*).

Of course, by this the *ṣūfīs* mean the second sobriety (*ṣaḥw-i duvum*). In the first sobriety (*ṣaḥw-i avval*), the *ṣūfī* is present with himself and absent from God, whereas it is the second sobriety (*ṣaḥw-i duvum*), which comes after intoxication (*mastī*), in which the *ṣūfī* is present with both himself and the creation. In other words, when the *ṣūfīs* speak of sobriety (*ṣaḥw*), terminologically, they mean the second sobriety (*ṣaḥw-i duvum*).

In this state, the *ṣūfī* is in love with beauty, is at the service of all, loves all things, practises love with respect to all things, does not take offence at the bad things that others may visit upon him, does not distinguish between acquaintance and stranger, experiences no anger, regrets nothing, is always joyful, is never depressed, has no consciousness of himself as the doer of things, and sees everything as God.

In the state of sobriety (*ṣaḥw*), the *ṣūfī* experiences all things as familiar, while seeing himself as alien to all things. Although he is with all things, he is utterly alone. Being in company or being alone is the same for him. Transitory things have no effect on him.

*Javād Nūrbakhsh, Sufi Symbolism, FNI11 p.131; cf. SSE11 pp.112–13*

The Sufi poets, 'Aṭṭār and Rūmī, put matters more succinctly:

What is sobriety (*ṣaḥw*)? –  
to set self apart from Self;  
Then through Self to become free of self.  
*'Aṭṭār, Muṣībat-Nāmāh, MNFA p.41; cf. in SSE11 p.113*

When the soul had become effaced in God,  
it did not go back to intoxication (*sukr*),  
but went on to sobriety (*ṣaḥw*).  
*Rūmī, Maṣnavī, MR1 p.330, in FNI11 p.132; cf. in SSE11 p.113*

See also: **dhawq**, **rayy**, **shurb**, **sukr**.

**sakīnah** (A), **sakīnat** (P) *Lit.* tranquillity, peace, calm; the inner peace of God; also, an enveloping divine radiance often associated with stories of Sufi

saints; from *sakana* (to be quiet, to abate, to be still, to dwell); related to *sukūn* (immobility) and *maskan* (dwelling, habitation); also, related to the Hebrew *Shekhinah* (dwelling), the cloud of glory indicating the divine presence, and the Mandaean *shkinta* (dwelling, habitation), a term used for the inner worlds. The term appears at several places in the *Qur'ān*:<sup>1</sup>

He it is who sent down tranquillity (*sakīnah*)  
into the hearts of the believers,  
that they might add fresh faith to their faith.

*Qur'ān* 48:4; cf. *AYA*

*Sakīnah* arises from inner contact – conscious or otherwise – with the Divine. The depth of contact varies, depending upon individual spiritual advancement:

The term *sakīnah*, in its literal sense, means peace of heart. In *ṣūfī* terminology, it signifies the peace that appears in the heart of the *ṣūfī* as an effect of infusions (*wāridāt*) from the Unseen, the causes of which vary according to the *ṣūfī*'s state and station. Consequently, tranquillity (*sakīnah*) has different characteristics at each of the wayfarer's stations.

*Javād Nūrbakhsh, Sufi Symbolism, FNI12 p.175; cf. SSE12 p.1*

Many Sufis have commented on this happy state. Jurjānī writes that it comes as a part of the experience of inner “contemplative vision (*mushāhadah*)”, an advanced level of mystic contemplation:

The *ṣūfīs* call tranquillity (*sakīnah*) whatever is sent down from the Unseen into the heart, bringing calm. It is a light that brings repose and peace of heart to one who is in contemplative vision (*mushāhadah*). Tranquillity (*sakīnah*) is itself part of the early stages of the eye of certainty (*‘ayn al-yaqīn*).

*Jurjānī, Ta'rīfāt, KTJ p.113; cf. in SSE12 pp.1–2*

This peace of God is vastly more than simply a contented frame of mind. It is an “illumination” that originates in “eternity” and even “pre-eternity”. “Pre-eternity” is a Sufi term used in the attempt to convey the notion of the divine Ocean before the emanation of creation:

Once the light of God's tranquillity (*sakīnah*) becomes established in the heart of the advanced one, his inner consciousness becomes illuminated with the purity of the lightning flash of pre-eternal power, and his intellect (*‘aql*) gains understanding of the ways of awe. At this stage, the illumination of the Essence of the Divinity shines forth from eternity so that the foundations of his nature submit calmly and with



equanimity to being overwhelmed by the advance troops of the army of the proof (*burhān*) of inspiration (*ilhām*).

*Rūzbiḥān, Mashrab al-Arwāḥ 3:6, MARB p.47; cf. in SSE3 p.14*

Those who are aware of such states can perceive it in others. Ibn al-‘Arabī describes “seven persons” that he met on his travels, and who had greatly impressed him:

I met them at Mecca, may God benefit all Muslims by them. I sat with them at a spot between the wall of the Hanbalites and the bench of *Zamzam* (close to the *Ka’bah* in the sanctuary). They were indeed the elect of God. So overwhelmed were they by holy tranquillity (*sakīnah*) and awe that they did not even blink their eyes. When I met them they were in a state of contemplation. No word passed between them on any matter, but I saw in them an almost unimaginable calm.

*Ibn al-‘Arabī, Sufis of Andalusia 53, SOA pp.141–42*

Shihāb al-Dīn Yaḥyā Suhrawardī speaks of the “pleasure” of *sakīnah* as the result of remaining for a while at some particular stage of deep contemplation. Returning to normal “human consciousness” brings with it a “profound regret” at having to leave that state of consciousness”:

When the lights of the inner consciousness (*sirr*) reach the end of a stage and do not hasten to proceed further, pausing for an extended period of time, this is known as tranquillity (*sakīnah*), the pleasure of which is more complete than that of other forms of illumination. When one comes out of tranquillity (*sakīnah*) and returns to human consciousness, one experiences profound regret in separation.

This tranquillity (*sakīnah*) is such that however much one may desire to be freed of oneself, one cannot achieve this. Consequently, one reaches such a state that every moment one wants to be released from one’s bodily frame, with a view to attaining the realm of the Splendour, of ascending to the highest horizon, being impelled to attain this in any way one can. Whenever one looks upon one’s own essence, one is gladdened to see the radiance of God’s lights beaming upon one.

Of course, this condition is still one of imperfection. At the next stage, one is in a condition where one cannot look upon one’s essence, for one’s perception is blocked. This is what is called the greatest annihilation (*fanā-yi akbar*). Having forgotten oneself, one then forgets forgetting, which is known as annihilation upon annihilation (*fanā dar fanā*).

*Shihāb al-Dīn Yaḥyā Suhrawardī, Ṣafīr-i Sīmurgh, MSF3 pp.321–24, in SSE12 p.2*

‘Aṭṭār points out that tranquillity arising from a heart that is open to divine love has value, but tranquillity stemming from ascetic practice and renunciation is liable to disturbance because it is based upon suppression:

If tranquillity (*sakīnat*) appears to you in love, that is good;  
But it has no value if it comes to you from asceticism.

*‘Aṭṭār, Dīvān 693:9338, DASN p.492, in SSE12 p.1*

Devotional tranquillity is food for the heart or soul, and arises from the “love of the masters”:

The sustenance that love of the masters (*khūbān*)  
has cast into my heart is tranquillity (*sakīnah*),  
which You have sent down, O Lord, into my heart.

*‘Alī Shāh Kirmānī, Dīvān-i Mushtāqīyah 24, DMK p.339; cf. in SSE12 p.1*

See also: **Shekhinah**.

1. *Qur’ān* 2:248, 9:26, 9:40, 48:4, 18, 26.

**sakkāya-dīṭṭhi** (Pa), **satkāya-dṛishṭi**, **satkāya-vāda** (S), **’jig tshogs la lta ba** (T), **xūwěi shēnjiàn** (C), **ushinken** (J) *Lit.* identity (*satkāya*) doctrine (*dṛishṭi*, *vāda*, *’jig lta*); personality belief, identity view; self-identity, self-identification, or self-illusion doctrine; false (*xūwěi*) identity (*shēn*) view (*jiàn*); the mistaken notion that one possesses an enduring self (S. *ātman*, Pa. *atta*) or individuality; the illusory belief that the ever-changing configuration of the five aggregates (S. *skandhas*, Pa. *khandhas*, T. *tshogs*) that constitute the sense of individuality have a permanent existence; the belief in an enduring self – the first of the five lower bonds or fetters (*saṃyojana*) that are understood to bind sentient beings to *saṃsāra* (transmigration); also called *ātma-dṛishṭi* (Pa. *atta-dīṭṭhi*), which means ‘self view’ or ‘belief in a self’, referring to the illusion of a separate self.

*Sakkāya* is of uncertain etymology. Commonly translated as ‘identity’ or in other similar ways, the Pali *sutta* commentaries maintain that *sakkāya* relates to the Sanskrit *sat-kāya* (‘existing aggregate’, ‘existing body’) and not to *sva-kāya* (‘own aggregate’, ‘own body’). Hence, according to the *Cūlavedalla Sutta* of the *Majjhima Nikāya*:

*Sakkāya* is said by the Blessed One to be a name for the five aggregates (*khandhas*) affected by clinging.

*Majjhima Nikāya 44, Cūlavedalla Sutta, PTSMI p.299*

The five aggregates are the five aspects of body and mind that comprise the individuality of a sentient being. They are: corporeality or body (S/Pa. *rūpa*); physical or mental sensations (S/Pa. *vedanā*); perceptions (S. *saṃjñā*, Pa. *saññā*); mental formations or constructions (S. *saṃskāra*, Pa. *sankhāra*); and consciousness (S. *viññāna*, Pa. *viññāna*). They are what human beings regard as their ‘selves’ and, according to Buddhist belief, it is this ever-shifting collection of changing and conditioned aggregates that repeatedly reincarnates in the cycle of transmigration (*saṃsāra*).

In the *Cūlavaddalla Sutta*, the question is asked, “How does the identity view (*sakkāya-diṭṭhi*) come about?” The reply is that it arises when the self is understood to be the same as, to be contained in, to be different from, or to be the owner of each of the five aggregates in turn. This makes twenty forms of *sakkāya-diṭṭhi*. The antidote is said to be not taking the body and the other *khandhas* to be the self.<sup>1</sup>

According to the Pali texts, the illusion of a separate self is permanently eliminated upon attaining the stage of a stream-enterer (Pa. *sotāpanna*), the first of four stages on the spiritual path, according to early Buddhism. The stream-enterer has overcome the first three *saṃyojanas* (bonds, fetters) of *sakkāya-diṭṭhi*, *sīlabbata-parāmāsa* (belief in rituals as a means to liberation), and *vicikicchā* (doubt and scepticism),<sup>2</sup> and has entered the supramundane world (*lokuttara*).

*Sakkāya-dṛiṣṭi* takes two forms: *śāśhvata-dṛiṣṭi* (S. doctrine of eternalism, Pa. *sassata-diṭṭhi*) and *uchchheda-dṛiṣṭi* (S. doctrine of annihilation, Pa. *uccheda-diṭṭhi*). The former maintains that there is an eternal self or soul that transmigrates from one body to another; the latter that the self is annihilated at death and that consequently there is no rebirth or law of *karma*.

There is often some confusion in the way the belief in an eternal soul or *ātman* is presented in Buddhist sources. The understanding of the doctrine in the Hindu tradition does not propose that the transient self or ego with which the majority of people identify is eternal. On the contrary, as in Buddhism, this superficial ‘self’ is regarded as an illusion. It is believed, nevertheless, that there is a core or ground of eternal being within everyone that in Indian philosophy is called the *ātman*, the real self or soul. Liberation and enlightenment consists of the realization of the true nature of this *ātman*, which is ultimately discovered to have no identity separate from that of *Brahman*, the supreme Reality. So in that sense, even the Hindu tradition does not believe in a separate and eternal self or soul. Since there cannot be two ultimate Realities, one for Buddhists and another for Hindus, it is axiomatic that the difference between the two perspectives is more intellectual and conceptual than real.

See also: **mithyā-dṛiṣṭi**, **sassata-diṭṭhi**.

1. *Majjhima Nikāya* 44, *Cūlavēdalla Sutta*, *PTSMI* p.300.
2. E.g. *Majjhima Nikāya* 6 (*Ākankheyya Sutta*), 22 (*Alagaddūpama Sutta*), *PTSMI* pp.34, 141.

**sālokya mukti** (S/H) See **sāyujya mukti**.

**salvation** (Gk. *sōtēria*, He. *yeshu'a*, L. *salvatio*) In religion, deliverance from suffering, evil, mortality, death, and so on; in some religions, restoration of the soul to a higher realm or state of being, sometimes including deliverance from the cycle of birth and death; in Christianity, deliverance by redemption from sin and its consequences, from hell and from the machinations of the devil, by faith in Christ, the saviour, who – through crucifixion – took upon himself the “sin of the world”;<sup>1</sup> often used synonymously with redemption, deliverance, emancipation, and liberation.

Although salvation is a matter of primary importance to all religions, the way it is understood and the means employed to achieve it vary. A feature common to the creation myths of the many religions is that man once lived in a blessed state, in harmony with a divine Creator, a state that was lost due to certain circumstances, and which at the same time explains the existence of pain, sickness, wickedness, death, and so forth. In one way or another, salvation is believed to restore man to his original state of blessedness. It is perhaps the inevitability of death and a fear of what happens at that time and afterwards, together with an inherent sense of immortality, that are the origins of the human interest in salvation.

Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam also believe that souls will be reunited with their resurrected bodies on a final Day of Judgment, prior to ultimate salvation or damnation. In Christianity and Islam, the Last Day is preceded by a complex sequence of events, which, in Christianity, culminates in the second coming of Christ.

Other traditions, such as the Greek mystical traditions (Orphism, Pythagoreanism, Platonism, *etc.*), together with Manichaeism, Hinduism, Sikhism and other traditions that believe in reincarnation, regard the body as a temporary affair, subject to decay. In this case, it is only the soul that can seek and receive salvation, and there is no final Day of Judgment.

In Buddhism, which believes in neither God nor an individual soul, a complex of physical and psychic elements (*S. skandhas*) undergo rebirth under the influence of *karma*. Salvation or liberation (*nirvāṇa*) is often understood as the complete obliteration of individual consciousness. While this may be so, Buddhist metaphysics also points out that the ultimate Reality transcends all concepts relevant to existence in this world. It is therefore impossible to describe the precise nature of *nirvāṇa*.

Indian *Vedānta* also believes that the notion of an individual soul (*ātman*) is essentially an illusion and that enlightenment consists of realizing the identity of the *ātman* with *Brahman*, the supreme Reality. Indian *sants* have similarly described the highest spiritual attainment as the merging of the drop of the soul into the divine Ocean.

While scholars and intellectuals may see differences in these ways of expression, the fact is that there can only be one Reality, which all these traditions acknowledge is beyond the capacity of the intellect to describe and which must be experienced to be understood. It is this experience that is known as 'salvation', and the various ways in which it is described and the various beliefs surrounding it make no difference to that ultimate experience.

The means by which salvation is achieved fall into three broad categories. Firstly, there is a belief in the efficacy of ritual and magic, as with the initiation ceremonies of some of the ancient mystery religions and the religion of ancient Egypt. Secondly, there is salvation through personal effort. This includes spiritual growth through prayer and various contemplative practices, striving towards perfection of human virtues, and even heroic death in the cause of religion, as in the case of Islam. Lastly, there is salvation through divine assistance, acknowledging that man cannot attain salvation without help, as in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. The three methods are not, of course, mutually exclusive.

Christianity has been described as the religion of salvation, *per se*. By divine plan, consequent to the fall of Adam, the divine Word, which is the true Son of God, incarnated as Jesus Christ in order to suffer death upon the cross, thereby atoning for the sins of the world. His death was sufficient for the salvation of all human beings, and all can profit from his sacrifice, provided they are willing to avail themselves of it. The final events leading to salvation are worked out in a complex scenario involving resurrection of the body and a Day of Judgment when some are saved and receive eternal life, while others are condemned to suffer eternal damnation. The situation is made more complex by the fact that souls are judged twice – once when they die, and once at the final resurrection, and a rationalist may ask, with good cause, whether the first judgment can be reversed.

The precise conditions leading to the salvation of each individual have remained a matter of theological debate and difference of opinion among the various Christian groups. Who, even among professed Christians, will be saved, and who will fail to make the grade? In answer to the 'heresies' of the breakaway Protestant movement, the Catholic Council of Trent in 1545 decreed that, for an adult, the process of salvation from sin was comprised of three stages.<sup>2</sup>

Firstly, there is the grace of God, which proceeds from divine love and mercy, and cannot be merited, and which man, out of his free will, may accept or reject. Secondly, the sinner must then be disposed for salvation by belief in the revelations and promises of God, must fear divine justice, must hope

for mercy and trust that God will be merciful to him, and must begin to love God and detest his sins. Lastly, the sinner receives the remission of his sins, his inner self is sanctified and renewed by the reception of God's grace and gifts, and he becomes a reformed man with hope of eternal life. This change takes place either through the perfect love of a wholly co-operative sinner, or by virtue of the sacraments of baptism and penance (also called confession), according to the individual's burden of sin. The remaining proviso for securing salvation is 'final perseverance', which entails preservation of the state of grace until the end of life, according to a verse from *Matthew*, "He that perseveres to the end shall be saved."<sup>3</sup> That is, the struggle towards perfection must be continued for the remainder of the believer's life. The Council further confirmed the belief that the change in the sinner comes about by virtue of the passion of Christ and the love of God.

All of the foregoing applies to adults. Children and those permanently deprived of reason are saved by virtue of the sacrament of baptism. The Council also noted that the precise nature of initial grace, the interaction of grace and free will, the exact nature of the fear and love that dispose a sinner towards the remission of sins, and the manner in which the sacraments can cause sanctifying grace, all remain a matter of theological debate. Indeed, a detached observer might readily conclude that the entire salvational edifice is a matter of religious debate and speculation, based upon an extension of pre-Christian, traditional mythology.

The Protestant understanding of salvation varies to some extent between the different schools. In general, however, Protestant salvation is subject to the five 'alones (*solas*)': by scripture alone, by faith alone, by grace alone, through Christ alone, and for the glory of God alone. These five *solas* are mentioned individually by reformist writers, but were not grouped together and classified as such until the twentieth century. Nonetheless, their intention was to distinguish reformist and Catholic belief.

'By scripture alone' identifies the primary reformist view that church practices, traditions and interpretations should conform to scripture. According to reformist understanding, Catholic practice includes innovation that is not based on scripture.

'By faith alone' signifies that good deeds, including meditation, contemplation and ascetic practices, are not essential for salvation. Such practices may indicate the presence of faith, but they are not in themselves the pathway to salvation.

'By grace alone' indicates that the merit of such good deeds plays no part in achieving salvation.

'Through Christ alone' specifically excludes the priestly class and the Catholic sacraments of confession and the last rites from the process of achieving salvation. For the attainment of salvation, Christ is the only valid mediator between the soul and God.

'For the glory of God alone' refutes the Catholic practice of reverence for and glorification of Mary the mother of Jesus, together with the many saints and angels of Catholic tradition, as also members of the Catholic priestly hierarchy, including the Pope.

These, expressed very briefly, are the five *solas*; but it must be added that theological debate and various other intellectual considerations have added many aspects and finer points of discussion and distinction to these basic ideas. It is doubtful, however, whether the majority of ordinary Christians of any persuasion are aware of these subtle considerations concerning their salvation.

However its details may be understood, the desire for salvation as life's primary goal is expressed throughout Christian literature. Hope of salvation and fear of damnation are powerful motivators. Preachers have expounded and expanded upon the kind of life that will lead to the one or to the other. But despite the rhetoric, the way to salvation remains a matter of belief and faith. In earlier times, it was generally said that either of two roads will secure salvation, an active life or a contemplative life. In modern times, the significance of a contemplative life has greatly diminished, and most Christians are content to lead a 'good life' in hope of salvation, giving little consideration to the eschatological events leading to the final sorting of souls for eternal salvation or damnation that underpin Christian belief.

A verse from Richard Rolle epitomizes the Christian approach to salvation. He prays for grace to overcome the devil, and to receive an unspecified salvation:

Remember your mercy, Jesus most sweet,  
that my life may shine resplendent in your power;  
And so that I can overcome my enemy,  
bestow on me your mighty salvation!

*Richard Rolle, Fire of Love 42; cf. FLML (2:12) p.189, FLRR p.189*

On the other hand, preachers have made full use of the human capacity to fear the unknown by underlining the uncertainty of salvation in the light of human weakness. As Bernard of Clairvaux maintained from the pulpit:

But you, my brother, your salvation is not yet assured; your charity as yet is either nonexistent or so meagre and reed-like that it bends with every breeze, puts its trust in every spirit, and is carried along by every wind of doctrine; or it is . . . so unsound that, contrary to the commandment, it bows to flattery, flinches under fear, is upset by sadness, shrivelled by avarice, entangled by ambition, disquieted by suspicions, tormented by insults, exhausted by anxieties, puffed up by honours, consumed by envy.

*Bernard of Clairvaux, On the Song of Songs 18.4, WBC1 p.135*

### *In Gnostic Christianity*

Although many gnostic Christians believed in Jesus as their saviour, their underlying incentive was the quest for the soul's innate immortality, leaving behind bondage to the body and the material world. Resurrection was understood to be of the soul, not of the body, and their concerns were for the here and now, not for some far-off Day of Judgment. A number of gnostic texts, like the *Pistis Sophia* and the *Apocryphon of John*, also insist that salvation includes release from rebirth.

According to the prayer of an unknown devotee in the *Second Apocalypse of James*, salvation entails being saved by the Holy Spirit from life and death in this world, being rescued from the Enemy, the devil, and being saved from human imperfections:

My God and my Father,  
 who saved me from this dead hope,  
 who made me alive  
 through a mystery of what He wills,  
 do not let my days in this world be prolonged. . . .  
 Deliver me from this place of sojourn!  
 Do not let Your grace be left behind in me,  
 but may Your grace become pure!

Save me from evil death!  
 Bring me from a tomb alive,  
 because Your grace – love – is alive in me  
 to accomplish a work of fullness!  
 Save me from sinful flesh,  
 because I trusted in You with all my strength!

Because You are the life of the Life,  
 save me from a humiliating Enemy!  
 Do not give me into the hand of a Judge  
 who is severe with sin!

Forgive me all my debts of days (gone by)!  
 Because I am alive in You,  
 Your grace is alive in me.  
 I have renounced everyone,  
 but have affirmed my belief in You.  
 Save me from evil affliction!

But now is the time and the hour:  
 O Holy Spirit, send me salvation.

*Second Apocalypse of James* 62–63; cf. *NHS11* pp.144–49



Salvation, however, is more than just being delivered from what is negative. It is attainment of the ineffable perfection that is God's. Hence, in the *Acts of John*, the apostle John prays to Jesus, hoping for salvation after his death:

Now, Lord, I have accomplished the stewardship  
with which I was entrusted;  
Account me worthy of your (eternal) rest,  
grant me with perfection that is in you,  
which is salvation unutterable and ineffable.

*Acts of John 113; cf. AAA p.67, ANT p.269*

In general terms, salvation is the release from the bondage and darkness of the body and this world, as the soul is taken into the light of God. Hence, in the *Acts of Thomas*, Judas Thomas speaks of Jesus as:

(You) who announced unto men their salvation,  
who showed light to them that are in darkness.

*Acts of Thomas 157; cf. ANT p.433*

Judas Thomas also identifies the Power that gives salvation and can subdue all human imperfections with the "Living Waters", an epithet of the divine Word:

Come, waters from the Living Waters,  
that were sent to us, . . .  
the Power of salvation which comes from  
that Power who conquers all things,  
and subdues them unto His own will.

*Acts of Thomas 52; cf. ANT p.389*

Whether in gnostic or traditional belief, salvation is not a matter of proclaiming a belief:

If mere words that bear testimony to it could bring about salvation, the whole world would experience it and would be saved.

*Testimony of Truth 32; cf. NHS15 pp.128–29*

Nor does hypocrisy lead to salvation:

Those who pray hypocritically deceive only themselves. Indeed, it is in order that He might know who is worthy of salvation that God examines the inward parts and searches the bottom of the heart. For no one is worthy of salvation who still loves this place of deception.

*On the Soul 136; cf. NHS21 pp.164–67*

In a number of gnostic texts, the understanding of salvation is expanded into a cosmogonic myth in which the entire creation receives salvation through the medium of the incarnated *Logos*. Why God should have fashioned a creation with a built-in need for salvation is a primary mystery that probably has no answer understandable by human reason. The *Tripartite Tractate* suggests that the divine “Will” subjected the creation (the “Totality”) to sin so that it might then be saved. God alone (“the Single One”) is not in need of salvation. It also says that it is the return to God that is called “redemption”:

The Will held the Totality under sin, so that by that Will He might have mercy on the Totality and they might be saved, while the Single One alone is appointed to give life, and all the rest need salvation. . . . Return to Him . . . is that which is called ‘the redemption’. It is the release from captivity and the acceptance of freedom.

*Tripartite Tractate 117; cf. NHS22 pp.302–5*

The same text also goes on to point out that all souls in the creation, not just human beings, need redemption, since all are separated from God. Even the Son, which is the Word or *Logos*, needed redemption when he became man, so that no one should doubt the need of redemption:

Not only do humans need redemption, but also the angels, too, need redemption along with the image and the rest of the *plērōmas* of the aeons and the wondrous powers of illumination (*i.e.* the whole of creation). So that we might not be in doubt in regard to the others, even the Son himself, who has the position of redeemer of the Totality, needed redemption as well – he who had become man – since he gave himself for each thing which we need, we in the flesh, who are his church.

Now, when he first received redemption from the Word which had descended upon him, all the rest received redemption from him, namely those who had taken him to themselves. For those who received the one who had received (redemption) also received what was in him.

*Tripartite Tractate 124–25, NHS22 pp.316–17*

The writer of the *Acts of John* also maintains that salvation has always been available, since the creation of the world, through past “prophets”:

O God who sent us into the world:  
     who revealed Yourself by the law and the prophets:  
 Who has never rested,  
     but always from the foundation of the world  
     has saved them that were able to be saved. . . .

Receive also the soul of John,  
 which, it may be, You regard as worthy.  
*Acts of John 112; cf. ANT pp.268–69*

Likewise, a Hermetic text, following the tradition of the Greek mystics, also says:

God does not ignore man; on the contrary, He knows him fully, and wishes to be known. For man, this is the only salvation – the knowledge (*gnōsis*) of God.

*Hermetica 10:15; cf. HAG p.81, HGCH p.33, TGH2 p.150*

### ***In Manichaeism***

One of the greatest expressions of the gnostic path was given by the third-century Iranian mystic, Mānī. According to Mānī's retelling of the gnostic myth, particles of the eternal and immortal divine Light become imprisoned by matter as individual souls. To effect its rescue, the Father of All sends out the *Nous* or *Vahman*, the divine Mind or Intelligence, who takes birth in this world as a saviour, and makes his presence known to his chosen ones. He tells them what to do to effect their escape, and takes them back to their eternal home in ships of light, travelling 'upwards' (spiritually speaking) on the *Srōshahrāy*, the Column of Sound or Column of Glory, also understood as the perfect or cosmic Man. Here, there is no doubt that salvation means the soul's return to God and its accompanying release from transmigration.

Many Manichaean hymns speak of this salvation. The saviour comes to this world on a mission of mercy and salvation:

Out of compassion, . . . he clothed himself in a body . . .  
 He revealed the path of salvation and the road of purity  
 to all souls who were in harmony with him.

*Manichaean Hymns, RMP an; cf. GSR p.37*

The eternal realm awaits those who acquire direct experience, realization, or knowledge of the Divine:

Lo, that great kingdom of salvation waits on high,  
 ready for those who have gnosis,  
 so that they may finally find peace there.

*Manichaean Hymns, RMP ap, GSR p.38*

In a hymn that uses Buddhist terminology, the saviour rescues souls from the wheel of birth and death (*saṃsāra*). Here, interestingly, the Buddhist *nirvāṇa* is interpreted as eternity, the "realm of the *buddhas*", to which

the soul returns. The “good Law” is the *Dharma*, interpreted as the divine *Nous* or Word.

We miserable beings without hope  
 would have remained in the torture of *saṃsāra*  
 without finding the end of your path.  
 You set up the ladder of Wisdom,  
 you allowed us to rise above the five forms of existence,  
 and redeemed us. . . .  
 We . . . who had been in the fetters of suffering,  
 were rescued from this *saṃsāra*. . . .  
 To those attached to transitory pleasures,  
 you preached the unparalleled true Law;  
 You lead them across the sea of suffering  
 and bring them to the good *nirvāṇa*.  
 To those who had been bound to the root of attachment,  
 you showed the road to the realm of the *buddhas*. . . .  
 To those who had plunged into the water of egotism,  
 you showed the bridge of the true Law.  
 You placed understanding of the good Law in their hearts. . . .

Seeking the roads and paths of salvation,  
 you traversed realms and lands in every direction.  
 When you found those beings desirous of salvation,  
 you rescued each of them without exception.

*Manichaean Hymns, TTT3 p.183ff., MTP p.168ff.; cf. GSR p.281*

Other hymns speak even more specifically of the soul’s yearning for rescue or salvation from transmigration:

Who will release me from all the pits and prisons,  
 in which are gathered lusts that are not pleasing? . . .  
 Who will lead me beyond rebirths, and free me from them all –  
 and from all the waves, in which there is no rest?  
 I weep for my soul, saying: may I be saved from this,  
 and from the terror of the beasts who devour one another!  
 The bodies of men, and of birds of the air,  
 of fish of the sea, and four-footed creatures and of all insects –  
 Who will take me beyond these and save me from them all,  
 so that I shall not turn and fall into the perdition of those hells?  
 So that I shall not pass through defilement in them,  
 nor return in rebirth.

*Manichaean Hymns, Huwīdagmān IVa:1, 5–9, MHCP pp.80–83*

Naturally, it is the saviour who is understood to bring about this salvation, as another hymn makes clear when the saviour responds:

Beloved! Beauty of my bright nature!  
 From these shall I lead you forth, and from all prisons.  
 I shall save you from all perdition,  
     and free you forever from all wounds.  
 Through perfect light [I shall cleanse] from you  
     all the filth and corrosion that you have passed through. . . .  
 Fear and death shall nevermore overtake you,  
     nor ravage, distress, and wretchedness.  
 Rest shall be yours in the place of salvation,  
     in the company of all the gods  
     and those who dwell in peace.

*Manichaean Hymns, Angad Rōšnān VI:42–44, 72–73;*

*cf. MHCP pp.144–45, 152–53*

The saviour in this instance would have been Mānī or one of his successors, but in the later Manichaean religion, the spiritual Jesus also came to be invoked as a saviour from birth and death:

Protect me in my corporeal existence, Jesus.  
 O Lord, save my soul from this birth-death:  
     full of love is your throne, bright . . .

*Manichaean Hymns, HR2 p.67, ML p.107*

Over time, especially as the Manichaean religion developed, some followers may have thought that salvation would come merely as a gift, given without effort. This is a characteristic in the development of many religions, but it is not what mystics themselves have taught. In a letter, possibly apocryphal, claiming to be addressed by Mānī to one of his leading disciples and probable successor, Mar Ammo, the writer emphasizes that it is only through spiritual practice that this salvation can be attained:

I have spoken these words in order that everyone may himself pay attention to them and listen attentively to them. For everyone who hears and believes them and keeps them in mind, and is active in spiritual practice (*lit.* pious deeds) shall find salvation from this birth-death, and shall be saved from his sins. Because I, Mar Mānī, and you, Mar Ammo, and all those people of old, as well as all those fortunate ones who are reborn in this time, . . . shall be saved from this birth-death through this pure Commandment (the Word) and through this perfect Wisdom, through this practice and this humility. Because in this

birth-death nothing is any good except for the merit accumulated by men of understanding through their spiritual practice (*lit.* pious deeds). Those who follow me, Mar Mānī, and hope in God *Ohrmazd*, . . . they are the ones that are saved and find salvation from this birth-death, and attain eternal redemption.

*Manichaean Letter, MM3 p.854ff., RMP r; cf. GSR pp.259–60, ML p.58*

See also: **deliverance, redemption, reincarnation and transmigration (in Manichaeism) (6.3), Saviour (2.1), saviour (7.1), yesu'a.**

1. *John* 1:29, *KJV*; see also *John* 4:42, 6:51.
2. See “salvation,” *Catholic Encyclopedia*, 1912.
3. *Matthew* 10:22.

**samādhi** (S/Pa/H), **samādh**, **samādhī** (Pu), **ting nge 'dzin** (T), **dīng, sānmèi** (C), **sanmai** (J) *Lit.* placing (*ādhi*) together (*sam*); putting together, establishing, making firm; hence, absorption, concentration, making the mind firm; specifically, absorption in meditation; hence, superconsciousness, mystic rapture, spiritual ecstasy, inner peace and serenity; a state of transcendent consciousness from which all sensations, images, and thoughts are eliminated; deep inner concentration, contemplation and absorption in which all consciousness and thought of the outer world is transcended and suspended as awareness awakens to the higher spiritual worlds; the goal of all forms of *yoga*, and a frequent topic in the *Upanishads* and the many yogic, tantric and allied texts, where different levels of *samādhi* are also described, the highest being a complete merging into the Infinite or *Brahman*; enumerated by Patañjali as the eighth and final aspect of *yoga*. The death of an advanced soul is sometimes called his *mahāsamādhi* (great *samādhi*). A *samādh*, *samādhī* or *samādhi mandir* (*i.e.* a memorial temple) is also a tomb or a mausoleum, especially of a holy man.

In Jainism, outside of its context as a yogic term, *samādhi* is sometimes used in a general sense for serenity and deep meditation. Jainism also speaks of *samādhi-maraṇa* (peaceful death, death in meditation), which is commonly associated or used synonymously with *sallekhanā*, voluntary death by fasting.

In Buddhism, *samādhi* is a key term throughout the extensive literature. Since Buddhism does not believe in a supreme deity, *samādhi* is not regarded as union with God, but as a state of consciousness. Generally speaking, it means one-pointed concentration of mind (S. *chitta-ekāgratā*, Pa. *citta-ekaggatā*) or meditative absorption, and is often used synonymously with *jhāna* (Pa. absorption) or *dhyāna* (S. contemplation), as well as *samatha* (Pa. tranquillity). According to the *Majjhima Nikāya*, “One-pointedness of mind

(*citta-ekaggatā*) ... is concentration (*samādhi*)”.<sup>1</sup> Buddhaghosa similarly defines *samādhi* as

the centring of mind and consciousness evenly and rightly on a single object, ... undistracted and unscattered.

*Buddhaghosa, Visuddhimagga 3:3, PTSV pp.84–85; cf. PPVM p.82*

Elsewhere, *samādhi* can refer to the states of consciousness attained by such one-pointedness, or to the particular method or practice used to achieve such states,<sup>2</sup> or more generally to putting all one’s energy and focus into some activity.

It is also acknowledged that concentration (*samādhi*) is something that is developed by meditation (Pa. *bhāvanā*), which leads to deep contemplation (Pa. *jhāna*). The *Dīgha Nikāya* says that *samādhi-bhāvanā* results in a fourfold blessing:

Concentrative meditation (*samādhi-bhāvanā*), when developed and expanded, leads to happiness here and now (*diṭṭha-dhamma-sukha*), the acquisition of knowledge and vision (*ñāṇa-dassana-paṭilābhā*), mindfulness and clear awareness (*sati-sampajañña*), and destruction of the corruptions (*āsavānaṃ khayā*).

*Dīgha Nikāya 33, Sangīti Sutta, PTSD3 p.222*

But there is no precise uniformity of meaning, although in the context of meditation, *samādhi* generally refers specifically to one-pointed concentration. *Samādhi-sambojjhanga* is the sixth of the seven factors leading to enlightenment (Pa. *bojjhanga*); the fourth of the five spiritual strengths or powers (Pa. *bala*); and the last step on the eightfold path (S. *samyak-samādhi*, right concentration, right meditation). Where the constituents of the eightfold path are divided into a triad of morality (S. *shīla*), concentration (*samādhi*) and wisdom (S. *prajñā*), *samādhi* is a collective name for the last three (right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration).

*Samādhi* appears in lists of the various mental factors identified by different schools of Buddhist psychology. According to the *Yogācāra* school and the *Sarvāstivāda* school of commentary on the Pali texts, *samādhi* is the fourth of five adjuncts to mental function (S. *vinīyata chaṭṭa*), which help the mind to ascertain and determine something, and which accompany all mental activity. These are: the underlying desire to experience or understand something (S. *chhanda*); focused determination or resolve to know about that something (S. *adhimoksha*); memory (S. *smṛiti*), such that whatever is ascertained about that something is remembered, and recalled when it is again encountered; concentration (*samādhi*), which enables the mind to discriminate between the positive and negative aspects of the something; and finally, understanding or insight (S. *dhī* or *prajñā*) into the nature of the something, which is the result

of the foregoing mental functions. These five mental adjuncts are said to be the natural companions of wholesome (S. *kushala*) thinking.

*Theravāda* Buddhism distinguishes three degrees of intensity of *samādhi*: *parikamma samādhi* (Pa. preparatory concentration); *upacāra samādhi* (Pa. threshold, approach, access, or neighbourhood concentration), entering the neighbourhood of or approaching full concentration, the partial concentration experienced immediately prior to entering the first of the *jhānas* (levels of contemplation); and *appanā samādhi* (Pa. attainment concentration, full concentration, experience of the first of the ascending sequence of *jhānas*). In the first two *samādhis*, the practitioner remains within the orbit of the physical body. In the third, he enters the first *jhāna* and goes beyond the material world.<sup>3</sup> These three degrees of *samādhi* are associated with various forms of *Theravāda* meditation, in particular, meditation on the forty meditation themes and objects (*kammaṭṭhānas*) that can be utilized in the appropriate manner for the purpose of attaining the *jhānas*.

The many other categories of Buddhist *samādhi* include *micchā samādhi* (Pa. wrong concentration), which refers to any karmically unwholesome focus, and *vajropama samādhi* (S. diamond-like or adamantine *samādhi*),<sup>4</sup> a stage of enlightenment described by the Tibetan master Gampopa (c. 1079–1153), a significant teacher in the early Kagyü tradition, as involving an absorption into the spiritual light and sound so transcendent that it is described as being as pure and indestructible as a diamond or adamant (*vajra*).

Later *Mahāyāna* texts list innumerable *samādhis*, each with their own name, the attainment of each being linked to the ability to perform particular miracles. In these and many other places, the actual meaning of the word *samādhi* has become generalized. The *Mahāprajñāpāramitā Sūtra* ('*Sūtra of the Highest Wisdom*'), for instance, lists one hundred and eight kinds of *samādhi*, while the *Saddharma-puṇḍarīka Sūtra* ('*Sūtra of the White Lotus of the True Dharma*', the '*Lotus Sūtra*') relates with seeming hyperbole:

At that time, within the realm adorned with all pure light was a *bodhisattva* named *Gadgadasvara* ('Wonderful Sound'), who had long since planted the roots of a multitude of excellences, made offerings to and approached with familiarity incalculable hundreds of thousands of myriads of millions of *buddhas*, achieving profound wisdom and attaining the *samādhi* of the fine standard (S. *dhvajāgra-keyūra samādhi-labdhaḥ*), the *samādhi* of the *dharma* blossom (*saddharma-puṇḍarīka*), the *samādhi* of pure excellence (*vimala-datta*), the *samādhi* of the sport of the king of constellations (*nakshatra-rāja-vikrīḍita*), the *samādhi* of no objects (*anilambha*), the *samādhi* of the seal knowledge (*jñāna-mudrā*), the *samādhi* that enables one to understand the speech of all living beings (*sarva-ruta-kaushalya*), the *samādhi* that collects all merits (*sarva-puṇya-samuchchaya*), the pure



*samādhi* (*prasādhavatī*), the *samādhi* of the play of magical powers (*ṛiddhi-vikrīḍita*), the *samādhi* of the lamp of knowledge (*jñānolkā*), the *samādhi* of the kings of adornments (*vyūha-rāja*), the *samādhi* of pure glow (*vimāla-prabhāsa*), the *samādhi* of the pure womb (*vimāla-garbha*), the unshared (*apkrītsna*) *samādhi*, and the *samādhi* that turns to the sun (*sūryāvarta*) – attaining, in sum, great *samādhis* of this sort equal in number to the grains of sand of a hundred thousand myriads of millions of Ganges rivers.

*Lotus Sūtra 24, T9 262:55a24–b3; cf. LBFD pp.303–4*

Since the Buddha did not permit any of his teachings to be committed to writing during his lifetime, it is difficult to know exactly what he himself taught, and what has been the elaboration of later Buddhists. Sayings attributed to the Buddha in the *Dhammapada*, one of the earliest texts, are not definitive either way. His observations concerning *samādhi* are understood from a human perspective:

Like a well-trained horse touched by a whip, be strenuous and zealous,  
and by faith, by virtue, by effort, by meditation (*samādhi*),  
by understanding of the *Dhamma*, and by being mindful (*patissata*),  
endowed with wisdom and good conduct (*sampanna-vijjā-carāṇa*),  
you will rid yourself of this great suffering (*dukkha*).

*Dhammapada 10:16*

Jealousy, he says, will prevent the attainment of *samādhi*:

Let him not undervalue what he receives,  
nor let him envy others.  
A *bhikkhu* who envies others will not attain *samādhi*.

*Dhammapada 25:6*

It seems clear that Buddha did not define *samādhi* as the highest stage of spiritual development:

Not merely by good conduct and self-discipline,  
nor simply by much learning,  
nor even by the attainment of mental concentration (*samādhi*),  
nor yet by a solitary life (thinking),  
“I have attained the bliss of release (from desire),  
which no worldly person can enjoy” –  
Rest not content (with these), O *bhikkhu*,  
as long as you have not removed all impurities.

*Dhammapada 19:16–17*

The Chinese *dìng* ('to set', 'to fix'), which in Buddhist and Daoist texts is understood to mean 'concentration', is a term used to translate not only *samādhi*, but also the Sanskrit *dhyāna* (meditation, meditative absorption, contemplation). It also appears in the expression *chán dìng*, where *chán* is a phonetic rendering of the Sanskrit *dhyāna*. *Chán dìng* covers the entire range of meditation, concentration, and so on. *Dìng* has been used by different translators at different times to translate over fifty Sanskrit words, including *dhyāna* (meditation), *niyama* (restriction), *samāhita* (fixed, concentrated), *samāpatti* (absorption), *shamatha* (tranquillity), and *yoga* (joining). *Chán*, on the other hand, has been used to translate *yoga*, *samādhi*, *samāpatti*, as well as *dhyāna* and some of its derivatives.<sup>5</sup> In Nāgārjuna's *Bodhisambhāra Shāstra* and Bhikshu Vashitva's (c.4th–5th) commentary on it, Nāgārjuna and his commentator observe that meditation requires vigilance, bringing the mind back to its focus whenever it strays away:

If the mind trained on the object becomes scattered,  
one should focus one's mindful awareness,  
return it to that object,  
and, whenever movement occurs, immediately cause it to halt.

When the *bhikshu* cultivating meditative concentration (*dìng*) is carrying on contemplative practice, he should keep the mind focused. He must not allow it to become scattered. If the mind departs from the chosen object of focus, he should immediately become aware of it, doing so with whatever intensity is required to prevent it from straying away from the object. He should keep returning the mind to its focus, establishing it directly on the object.

In this, it is like using a rope to tie a monkey so securely to a post that it can only wind itself more closely to the post and cannot wander off elsewhere. In the same manner, one should use the rope of mindfulness to tie the monkey of the mind securely to the post of the object of meditation, doing so in a way that it can only wind itself ever more closely to the post of the meditation object, thus becoming unable to stray off somewhere else.

*Bhikshu Vashitva, on Nāgārjuna, Bodhisambhāra Shāstra 89,  
T32 1660:534b23–27; cf. BTCV pp.290–93*

Yogic and other Indian traditions have linked *samādhi* with personal experience of the Divine. The *Vishṇu Purāṇa* defines *samādhi* as the highest realization:

What is called *samādhi*  
is the realization of the true nature of God Himself,  
bereft of attributes, and brought about by meditation.

*Vishṇu Purāṇa 6:7.92*

The *Yājñavalkya Smṛiti* says much the same:

The non-dual *Brahman*, the ultimate Cause, all light, all bliss, dwells in all beings. It is eternal and immortal. The individual self should meditate on It with single-minded devotion and be completely absorbed in It. This total losing of the self in the supreme Self is called *samādhi*. The aspirant should control the mind and the senses, and concentrate on the supreme Self. Fixing his attention on It, he must not think of anything else. Thus he loses himself in the indivisible supreme Self, which is the inmost consciousness of all, and becomes one with It.

*Yājñavalkya Smṛiti*, in U2 p.79

The *Māṇḍūkya Upanishad* identifies *samādhi* with the supreme *Ātman* (Self), which is the same as *Brahman*:

*Ātman* is beyond all expression by words, and beyond all acts of the mind. It is great peace, eternal effulgence, and *samādhi*; It is unmoving and fearless.

*Gauḍapāda*, *Kārikā* 3:37, on *Māṇḍūkya Upanishad*, U2 p.305

Imaginings such as ‘you’, ‘I’ and ‘this’ come about through the defects of the discriminating mind (*buddhi*). But when the *Paramātman*, the One without a second, manifests Itself in *samādhi*, all the aspirant’s imaginings are dissolved, through the realization of the truth of *Brahman*....

Only the utterly detached person attains *samādhi*, and only the man of *samādhi* receives steady realization. Only he who has realized the Truth is free from bondage, and only the free soul experiences eternal bliss.

*Shankara*, *Vivekachūḍāmaṇi* 354, 375; cf. *VCSM* pp.134, 142

Other texts say much the same:

*Samādhi* is the union of the *jīvātmā* (individual self) and the *Paramātman* (higher Self), without the threefold state (of knower, known, and knowledge). It is of the nature of extreme bliss and pure consciousness.

*Shāṇḍīlya Upanishad* 1:72; cf. *C108*

Now I will tell you about *samādhi*, which destroys the ills of birth and death. *Samādhi* is that state in which there is consciousness that the *jīvātmā* and *Paramātmā* are one.... Though the *Ātmā* is one, due to the effects of illusion, it appears as different things. Really there is no difference between these so called things. When a person sees

all things within himself, and sees himself as a part of all things, he attains *Brahman*. When a person drowns himself in *samādhi* and does not see any difference between things, then he attains the single aim of salvation. Then he sees only the true soul, and the entire world appears as an illusion to him, and he is cured of all sorrow.

*Jābāla-darshana Upanishad 8; cf. C108*

It is also said that when the individual *jīva* merges into *Brahman*, then all *karmas* and impressions of the past are destroyed:

It is *samādhi* when the mind (*chitta*), rising above the distinction of the contemplator and contemplation, merges into the contemplated (still and bright) like a lamp in a windless place. . . . Through this (*samādhi*), tens of millions of *karmas*, that have accumulated during cycles of rebirth without beginning are destroyed, and pure *dharma* (spirituality) is developed.

Yogic adepts call this *samādhi*, *dharmamegha* (cloud of spirituality), because – through persistent practice – showers of nectar fall from it in great quantities, and by it multitudinous *vāsanās* (impressions) are entirely destroyed, and all the accumulated *karmas*, both virtuous and sinful, are pulled up by their roots.

*Paingala Upanishad 3:2*

The means to attain this supreme *samādhi*, say a number of texts including the *Maitrī Upanishad* and the *Bhagavad Gītā*, is that of *yoga*:

Here are the rules for achieving this (oneness): control of the breath (*prāṇāyāma*), withdrawal of the senses (*pratyāhāra*), meditation (*dhyāna*), concentration (*dhāraṇā*), contemplation (*tarka*), and absorption (*samādhi*). Such is said to be the sixfold *yoga*. When by this means the sage beholds the brilliant Maker, Lord, Being, and source of *Brahmā*, then, shaking off good and evil,<sup>6</sup> he finds that everything becomes one in the supreme Imperishable.

*Maitrī Upanishad 18; cf. PU p.830*

When your mind, bewildered by confusing scriptural doctrines,  
finds rest in steady and unwavering *samādhi*,  
then you will have attained real *yoga*.

*Bhagavad Gītā 2:53*

The *Bhagavad Gītā* also describes the state of those who are able to remain in *samādhi* while continuing with their normal daily activities as *brahmakarma samādhi*. For such people, every act is an offering or sacrifice to *Brahman*.<sup>7</sup>

The *Haṭha Yoga Pradīpikā* describes the state of *samādhi* attained by the practice of *haṭha yoga*, *rāja yoga*, and *prāṇāyāma*:

As salt merges in the sea, when the mind and *ātman* are united – that is called *samādhi*.

When the movement of *prāṇa* is completely annihilated, then the mind is reabsorbed – that is called *samādhi*.

When the twofold nature of the individual soul and cosmic Soul becomes one, and all mental activity is ended – that is called *samādhi*.

*Haṭha Yoga Pradīpikā* 4:5–7; cf. HYP p.47, HYPM p.473

And:

In *samādhi*, a *yogī* is neither consumed by the processes of *kāla* (time, death), nor is he affected by *karma*, nor by any other influence.

In *samādhi*, a *yogī* knows neither smell, taste, form, touch, or sound (*tanmātras*); he is not aware of his own self (ego), nor that of others.

One whose mind is neither asleep nor awake, who has neither remembering nor forgetting, neither unconscious nor active – he indeed is liberated.

In *samādhi*, a *yogī* is unaware of (distinctions of) heat and cold, pain and pleasure, honour and dishonour.

He who seems asleep in the waking state, who is without breathing yet is perfectly healthy – he is truly liberated.

In *samādhi*, a *yogī* cannot be killed by any weapon, is beyond the control of any person, and beyond the reach of incantations and charms.

*Haṭha Yoga Pradīpikā* 4:108–13; cf. HYPM pp.593–94, 600

Patañjali defines *samādhi* as the third and deepest phase of meditation. Firstly, the practitioner learns *dhāraṇā*, concentration or focusing of the mind on something. This leads to contemplation or visualizing on that something. *Samādhi* is when the contemplation becomes such that the practitioner merges into and becomes absorbed in the object of contemplation:

Concentration (*dhāraṇā*) is the focusing of the mind on something either specific or general.

While concentrated, continuous flow of the mind towards that object is contemplation (*dhyāna*).

In contemplation, when the mind is conscious of the object of contemplation only, and not of itself, that is absorption (*samādhi*). . . .

The state of *samādhi* is attained  
 through the elimination of distraction  
 and the rise of one-pointedness of mind (*chitta*).

*Patañjali, Yoga Sūtras 3:1–3, 11*

Shankara identifies various obstacles that come in the way of a practitioner. Here, “emptiness (*shūnyatā*)” or blankness refers to spiritual dryness, which comes in the life of all spiritual seekers, and the “tasting of joy (*rasāsvāda*)” refers to getting delayed by attraction to a lower degree of bliss:

When practising *samādhi*, many obstacles unavoidably appear, such as lack of interest (*anusandhāna-rāhitya*), apathy (*ālasya*), desire for sense pleasures (*bhoglāsa*), sleep (*laya*), dullness (*tama*), distraction (*vikshepa*), tasting of joy (*rasāsvāda*), and a sense of emptiness (*shūnyatā*). One desiring knowledge of *Brahman* should slowly get rid of such innumerable obstacles.<sup>8</sup>

*Shankara, Aparokshānubhūti 127–28; cf. SRSS p.69*

Ramakrishna describes *samādhi* in a more personal manner, pointing out that the experience is beyond the power of words to convey:

One attains the knowledge of *Brahman* in the state of *samādhi*, then one has the vision of *Brahman*. In that ecstatic realization, the process of thinking stops completely, and one becomes perfectly silent. Nobody has the power to explain *Brahman* in words. A salt doll went to measure the depth of the ocean. But it could provide no information. As soon as it went into the ocean, it dissolved. Who was there to give the report?

*Ramakrishna, in Kathāmṛita; cf. SRK3*

Mystics have the power to give their disciples a taste of *samādhi*. At the end of his life, Ramakrishna passed on some of his spiritual wealth to a young disciple, later to become well-known in the West for his expositions of *yoga* and *Vedānta*:

Toward the end, his chief concern was for the future of his young disciples. Two he had especially loved. One of them, later to be known as Swami Brahmananda, he regarded as his own spiritual son. The other, Naren (afterwards Swami Vivekananda), he had trained to be the bearer of his message to the world.

One day, while Ramakrishna lay in the last stage of his illness, Naren was in a downstairs room, meditating. Suddenly, he lost consciousness, and went into *samādhi*. At first, the experience terrified

him. Coming to himself, he cried, “Where is my body?” Another of the boys saw him, and ran upstairs in a fright to tell Ramakrishna. “Let him stay that way for a while,” said the master calmly. “He has worried me long enough.”

Much later, Naren himself came into Ramakrishna’s room. He was full of delight and peace. “Now Mother has shown you everything,” said Ramakrishna. “But I shall keep the key. When you have done Mother’s work, you will find the treasure again.”

*Christopher Isherwood, Vedanta for the Western World, VFWW pp.20–21*

Swami Vivekananda himself had much to say on the subject:

All the different steps in *yoga* are intended to bring us scientifically to the superconscious state, or *samādhī* . . .

*Samādhī* is the property of every human being – nay, every animal. From the lowest animal to the highest angel, some time or other, each one will have to come to that state, and then, and then alone, will real religion begin for him. Until then we only struggle towards that stage. There is no difference now between us and those who have no religion, because we have no experience. What is concentration good for, save to bring us to this experience? Each one of the steps to attain *samādhī* has been reasoned out, properly adjusted, scientifically organized, and, when faithfully practised, will surely lead us to the desired end. Then will all sorrows cease, all miseries vanish; the seeds for actions will be burnt, and the soul will be free forever.

*Swami Vivekananda, Rāja Yoga 7, CWSVI pp.185, 188*

When the mind has attained to that state which is called *samādhī* – perfect concentration, superconsciousness – it goes beyond the limits of reason, and comes face to face with facts which no instinct or reason can ever know.

*Swami Vivekananda, Rāja Yoga 3, CWSVI p.150*

When a man goes into deep sleep, he enters a plane beneath consciousness. He works the body all the time, he breathes, he moves the body, perhaps, in his sleep, without any accompanying feeling of ego; he is unconscious, and when he returns from his sleep, he is the same man who went into it. The sum total of the knowledge which he had before he went into the sleep remains the same; it does not increase at all. No enlightenment comes. But when a man goes into *samādhī*, if he goes into it a fool, he comes out a sage.

What makes the difference? From one state a man comes out the very same man that he went in, and from another state the man comes

out enlightened, a sage, a prophet, a saint, his whole character changed, his life changed, illumined. These are the two effects. Now, the effects being different, the causes must be different. As this illumination with which a man comes back from *samādhi* is much higher than can be got from unconsciousness, or much higher than can be got by reasoning in a conscious state, it must, therefore, be superconsciousness, and *samādhi* is called the superconscious state.

*Swami Vivekananda, Rāja Yoga 7, CWSV1 pp.180–81*

In many instances, *samādhi* implies complete absorption, loss of personal identity, and union with *Brahman*. However, several terms exist, qualifying the degree of *samādhi* experienced. Broadly speaking these may be divided into *samādhi* in which some degree of self-consciousness remains (*savikalpa samādhi*, *sabīja samādhi*, *samprajñāta samādhi*), and the highest *samādhi* (*nirvikalpa samādhi*, *asamprajñāta samādhi*, *nirbīja samādhi*) in which all sense of personal identity is lost:

Absorption (*samādhi*) is of two kinds, viz. that attended by self-consciousness and that without it.

*Savikalpa samādhi* (conditioned absorption, absorption with self-consciousness) is that in which the mind taking the form of *Brahman*, the One without a second, rests on It, but without losing the distinction of knower, knowledge, and the object of knowledge. . . .

*Nirvikalpa samādhi* is complete merging in *Brahman*, the One without a second, of the mind which has identified with It, the distinction of knower, knowledge, and the object of knowledge being thus eliminated.

*Sadānanda, Vedāntasāra 193–94, 197; cf. VSY pp.109–10*

In practice, *samādhi* is used for various stages on the inner ascent. Wherever the mind and soul, or the soul alone, become absorbed and concentrated inside may be called a *samādhi*. According to the spiritual height attained by the individual, and the guidance received, this absorption can be experienced at many levels between the ‘sky’ of the body (*chidākāsha*) and the Supreme. The creative hierarchy is not arranged as a smooth transition from the highest down to the lowest (physical) level. It is arranged as a series of realms, each created out of its own sky (*ākāsha*) or void (*shūnya*, *sunna*). As the soul rises up, it becomes successively absorbed in *samādhi* in each of these *sunnas* or *ākāshas*. But it must then pass on to the next higher region, and the next higher *samādhi*.

Among the Indian *sants*, *samādhi* comes about by meditation on the divine Word (*Shabd*). Guru Nānak says of the disciple:



Through the *satguru's Shabd*,  
 he burns away his anger.  
 He dwells in the *gagan niwās* (tenth sky),  
 immersed in *samādh*.

*Guru Nānak, Ādi Granth 411, AGK*

Here, *gagan niwās* (tenth sky) probably refers to the region above the universal mind, also known as *daswān dwār* (tenth door) or *sun*n (void). Guru Arjun says that God (*Har*) always protects devotees who are intoxicated with His love through constant contact with the divine Word or Name (*Nām*):

The Lord's Name, *Har Har*,  
 is the treasure of wealth of His servants.  
 The treasure of the Lord has been bestowed  
 on His servants by God Himself.  
 The Lord, *Har Har*, is the all-powerful protection of His servants:  
 His servants know no other than the Lord's magnificence.  
 Through and through, His servants are imbued with the Lord's love.  
 In *sun*n *samādh* (deepest absorption),  
 they are intoxicated with the essence of the *Nām*.  
 Twenty-four hours a day, His servants chant (*japai*), "*Har Har*."

*Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 265, AGK*

He also says that prior to the creation, God Himself was wrapped in a deep and silent *sun*n *samādh*i (deep absorption):

He possesses all qualities (*sargun*);  
 He transcends all qualities (*nirgun*);  
 He is the formless Lord (*nirankār*).  
 He Himself is *sun*n *samādh*i.  
 Through His creation, O Nānak,  
 he meditates on Himself.

*Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 290, AGK*

See also: **asamprajñāta samādh**i, **aśṭāṅga yoga** (8.5), **nirbīja samādh**i, **nirvikalpa samādh**i, **sahaja**.

1. *Majjhima Nikāya* 44, *Cūlavēdalla Sutta*, *PTSMI* p.301.
2. See Henepola Gunaratana, *The Jhanas*, *JTBM* p.6.
3. Buddhaghosa, *Visuddhimagga* 3, in *FBFL* IV.
4. See e.g. Gampopa, *Jewel Ornament of Liberation* 18:107b, 19:117a, 118b–119b.

5. See “dhyāna,” “ding,” *Buddhist Chinese-Sanskrit Dictionary, BCSD*.
6. Cf. *Muṇḍaka Upanishad* 3:1.3.
7. *Bhagavad Gītā* 4:24.
8. Cf. *Tejobindu Upanishad* 40–42.

**samāhita-jñāna** (S), **mnyam bzhaḡ ye shes** (T), **děngyǐn zhì** (C), **tōin chi** (J) *Lit.* knowledge (*jñāna*, *ye shes*, *zhì*, *chi*) in equipoise (*samāhita*, *mnyam bzhaḡ*, *děngyǐn*, *tōin*); the wisdom of meditative equipoise; the wisdom, gnosis or mystical insight of a supremely concentrated, composed, and collected mind; transcendental illumination; direct realization and perception of the inner Reality in the absence of all conceptual, discursive, and dualistic thought; the wisdom of a mystic that is realized in deep meditation or *samādhi*. The state of *samāhita* is often depicted in the same way as *samādhi* (absorption, concentration), *samāpatti* (equipoise), and *ekāgra* (one-pointedness).

In the many early forms of pre-*Mahāyāna* Indian Buddhism, also carried forward into the later *Yogācāra* school, the path to enlightenment is described as a five-stage process (*pañcha-mārga*). Stage one entails the accumulation of merit (*puṇya*), the cultivation of virtues, and development of the awareness and understanding required to travel on the path. Stage two involves further preparation in which the practitioner also begins the practice of meditation and the development of the higher wisdom. In stage three, the meditator begins to see things as they really are. Stage four is a deepening of the practices and experiences of stage three. The final stage is attainment of enlightenment. In stages three and four, the meditator is said to enjoy *samāhita-jñāna* of an increasingly deep nature, culminating in the enlightenment experience.

See also: **jñāna**, **pañcha-mārga** (►4).

**samāpatti** (S/Pa), **sn̐yom ’jug** (T), **děngzhì, zhèngshòu** (C), **tōji, shōju** (J) *Lit.* coming together, meeting; completion, attainment; becoming, assuming a state or condition; meditative equipoise, meditative absorption (*sn̐yom ’jug*, *děngzhì*, *zhèngshòu*, *tōji*, *shōju*); used in Buddhism for several kinds of spiritual attainment, but especially for the eight levels of attainment that correspond to the eight *jhānas* (states of meditative absorption), plus a ninth in which the *jhānas* are transcended. Although distinctions between *samāpatti* and *jhāna* are made in a few texts,<sup>1</sup> the two are generally used almost synonymously.

According to the Pali *suttas*, and the associated scholarly *Abhidhamma* and commentaries, after passing through a sequence of preliminary stages of concentration (*samādhi*), a meditator successively attains the first four

*jhānas*, which relate to the realms of subtle form (*rūpaloka*, *rūpāyatana*). These four *rūpa-jhānas* are followed by successive attainment of the four formless or immaterial *jhānas* (*arūpa-jhānas*), which relate to the formless or immaterial realms (*arūpaloka*, *arūpāyatana*). Successive attainment of these stages is described as *anupubba-vihāra-samāpatti* (attainment of the successive abodes) or *anupubba-samāpatti*. Likewise, *samādhi-samāpattikusalatā* means skilfulness (*kusalatā*) in attainment (*samāpatti*) of meditation (*samādhi*), i.e. the ability to enter into meditative states at will. Rising above even the four *arūpa-jhānas* is called *nirodha-samāpatti* (attainment of cessation) or *abhi-saññā-nirodha-sampajāna-samāpatti* (attainment of the fully aware, ultimate cessation of knowing), which implies a state of consciousness in which all mental function has ceased. This is the attainment of an *arahanta* (noble one, enlightened one) or *anāgāmī* (non-returner, one who will no longer return to rebirth). It is believed that those who attain a particular *jhāna* during the present life are reborn in a corresponding realm after death.

*Samāpatti* is used in Indian yogic texts for the classification of various degrees of ecstasy, where it is used more or less synonymously with *samādhi*.<sup>2</sup> Patañjali speaks of *ananta-samāpatti*, which implies absorption of the mind in the infinitude (*ananta*) of *Brahman*, the supreme Reality.<sup>3</sup>

See also: **arūpāyatana** (8.5), **jhāna** (8.5), **nirodha-samāpatti**.

1. E.g. *Sūtra of Perfect Enlightenment* (*Yuánjué jīng*) 7–8, T17 842:917c–919a, ASNC pp.84–91.
2. See “samādhi,” *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Yoga*, EDYF.
3. Patañjali, *Yoga Sūtras* 2:47.

**samatā** (S/Pk) *Lit.* equanimity; a peaceful state of mind; complete calmness and balance of mind; an even-mindedness that remains unperturbed by the events of life that would normally induce feelings such as pleasure and pain, happiness and sadness, comfort and adversity, likes and dislikes, respect and disrespect, excitement and disappointment; a detached and dispassionate attitude, devoid of aversion and hatred, attraction and attachment, and so on; also, equality or sameness, seeing all life and phenomena as one and perceiving all living beings to be equal; a state of mind that is unaffected by *karma*; a fundamental principle of Jain philosophy, which maintains that the natural state of the soul is one of *samatā*.

*Samatā* is one of seven attributes of a true spiritual seeker mentioned by the Jain teacher Shrīmad Rājchandra (1867–1901):

Compassion (*dayā*), tranquillity (*shānti*), equanimity (*samatā*), forgiveness (*kshamā*), truth (*satya*), renunciation (*tyāga*) and

detachment (*vairāgya*) are always present in the heart of one who is eager for liberation (*mumukshu*).

*Shrīmad Rājchandra, Āmasiddhi 138; cf. AAGA p.245*

The Jain *āchārya* Haribhadra lists *samatā* as one of five steps that lead to accomplishment in *yoga*. Study and contemplation of the truth accompanied by purification of the self (*adhyātma*) leads to the continuous practice of study and purification (*bhāvanā*, cultivation, refinement). This in turn leads to concentration of the mind (*dhyāna*), followed by equanimity or peace of mind (*samatā*), culminating in the elimination of all traces of desire and *karma* (*vr̥tti-saṃkshaya*).<sup>1</sup>

In Buddhism, *samatā* is one of the *pañcha-jñānas* (five awarenesses) – the five aspects of enlightenment (*bodhi*). In this context, *samatā* means ‘sameness’ and refers to the awareness that all phenomena are a part of one whole. The term is especially prevalent in the *Yogāchāra* school of *Mahāyāna* Buddhism.

See also: **pañcha-jñāna, sāmāyika** (8.5).

1. Haribhadra, *Yogabindu* 31.

**samatha** (Pa), **shamatha** (S) *Lit.* serenity, tranquillity, calmness, quiescence; quietude of mind; in Buddhism, absence of passion and uncontrolled thoughts; often twinned with *vipassanā*, (penetrating insight into the true nature of physical and mental phenomena as they arise and disappear), both of which are depicted as part of the fruits of meditation arising on the path to enlightenment (*bodhi*), and as essential for the elimination of various human imperfections and the attainment of *nibbāna*. See **samatha** (8.5), **vipassanā** (8.5).

**sambodhi, sambodha** (S/Pa), **rdzogs pa'i byang chub** (T), **zhèngjué** (C), **shōgaku** (J) *Lit.* complete (*sam, rdzogs pa*) or supreme (*zhèng, shō*) enlightenment (*bodhi, byang chub, jué, gaku*); the enlightenment of a *buddha*; often as *samyak-sambodhi* (S. full and complete enlightenment, Pa. *sammā-sambodhi*) or *anuttara-samyak-sambodhi* (incomparable, full and complete enlightenment); hence also, *sambuddha* (enlightened, an enlightened one).

Although early Pali sources often refer respectfully to a *buddha*'s enlightenment as *sammā-sambodhi*, no distinction is made between the enlightenment of an *arhat* (a fully liberated and enlightened being), a *pratyeka-buddha* (an independent, *i.e.* non-teaching, *buddha*), and a *buddha* who teaches others. Later Pali sources, however, do make a distinction between the three, while *Mahāyāna* texts regard *samyak-sambodhi* as the highest of the three, attained after many lifetimes of spiritual endeavour as a *bodhisattva*. A

*bodhisattva* is a *Mahāyāna* conception, referring to one who has vowed not to enter a *nirvāṇa* from which there is no return, until all sentient beings have attained enlightenment.

According to *Mahāyāna* doctrine, attainment of the highest enlightenment requires removal of both the veil of impurities (*kleshāvaraṇa*) and the veil that covers the highest truth (*jñeyāvaraṇa*). *Mahāyāna* philosophers maintain that this happens by realization of *pudgala-shūnyatā* (nonexistence of soul) and *dharma-shūnyatā* (nonexistence of all beings and phenomena). *Mahāyāna* theorists therefore maintain that *samyak-sambodhi* is the highest level of enlightenment. *Dharma-shūnyatā*, however, is an entirely *Mahāyāna* concept, and the earlier *Theravāda* texts are saying much the same when they speak of the need to overcome both impurities (*kilesa*) and spiritual ignorance (*avijjā*) in order to reach enlightenment.

The Pali *Anguttara Nikāya* maintains that the help of a noble or admirable friend (S. *kalyāṇa-mitra*, C. *shànzhīshi*) – a spiritual friend or teacher – is essential for developing the “wings of self-awakening (*sambodhi*)”.<sup>1</sup> In this respect, *Mahāyāna* teachings agree. The *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* (C. *Huáyán jīng*), for example, originally a Sanskrit text, extant in Chinese translation, relates the story of how the young seeker Sudhana is sent by his spiritual friend, the *bodhisattva* Mañjushrī to meet with fifty-three such spiritual friends or benefactors in his quest for unsurpassable, perfect enlightenment (*anuttara-samyak-sambodhi*):

Mañjushrī, . . . turning to gaze upon Sudhana, said, “It is good that you have set your mind upon attaining unsurpassable, perfect enlightenment (S. *anuttara-samyak-sambodhi*), and desire close association with spiritual friends (*shànzhīshi*) in order to enquire about *bodhisattva* practice and how to cultivate the *bodhisattva* path. Serving and keeping the company of spiritual friends (*shànzhīshi*) is the initial condition and logical step towards the attainment of all wisdom.”

*Avataṃsaka Sūtra* 62, T10 279:333b27–c2

In yogic and allied texts, *sambodha* simply refers to knowledge, wisdom, or understanding:

When established in non-covetousness, knowledge (*sambodha*) concerning the processes of birth (and death) is obtained.

*Patañjali, Yoga Sūtras* 2:39

See also: **bodhi**, **kalyāṇa-mitra** (7.1), **pratyeka-buddha** (7.1), **samyak-sambuddha** (7.1), **śiṃhāsana** (7.5), **upāya-kaushalya** (7.5).

1. *Anguttara Nikāya* 9:1, *Sambodhi Sutta*, PTS4 p.351.

**sāmīpya mukti** (S/H) See **sāyujya mukti**.

**samprajñāta samādhi** (S) See **asamprajñāta samādhi**.

**saṃshaya** (S) *Lit.* doubt, uncertainty; in Jain philosophy, one of the three fallacies that lead away from correct or right knowledge (*samyag-jñāna*), these three being *vimoha* (delusion), *vibhrama* (vagueness), and *saṃshaya*.<sup>1</sup> In a Jain context, *vimoha* and its synonym *viparyaya* are commonly understood to mean ‘perverse or incorrect belief’.

1. See *e.g.* Nemichandra, *Dravya Saṃgraha* 42; Kundakunda, *Niyamasāra* 51.

**samudghāta** (S) *Lit.* bursting forth, expansion, overflow, emanation; a Jain term for the ability of the soul to go temporarily beyond the confines of the physical body, without entirely leaving it, in order to perform some action; a process credited to beings of advanced spiritual power.

According to Jain philosophy, a *jīva* (incarnate soul) ‘fills up’ or ‘becomes equal in size’ to the body it inhabits. ‘Filling up’ a body is understood in the same way that a bright light fills an enclosed space, however large or small the space may be. In Jain terminology, both the *jīva* and the entire spatial universe (*lokākāsha*) are made up of an equal number of tiny particles (*pradeshas*). This gives the soul the potential to be all-pervasive and hence all-knowing. However, due to the adherence of karmic particles, the *jīva* does not normally experience itself as all-pervasive, as filling up the entire *lokākāsha*. *Samudghāta* is when some of the particles (*pradeshas*) that comprise the soul expand beyond the confines of the physical body. *Lokākāsha* is the inhabited universe, where all *jīvas* dwell. It consists of space or ether (*ākāsha*), time (*kāla*), matter (*pudgala*), *dharma* (the cosmic principle underlying motion or action), and *adharma* (the cosmic principle underlying rest or stillness). *Lokākāsha* has three main divisions: celestial, intermediate (where human beings and many other creatures dwell), and hellish.

*Samudghāta* is generally said to be of seven kinds:

1. *Vedanā-samudghāta*. Expansion due to agony (*vedanā*), in which the soul goes beyond the confines of the body due to extreme and unbearable suffering.
2. *Kashāya-samudghāta*. Expansion due to passion (*kashāya*), in which the soul goes beyond the confines of the body due to extreme passion, such as anger, in order to cause harm to others.

3. *Vikriyā-samudghāta*. Expansion due to perturbation (*vikriyā*), in which the soul goes beyond the confines of the body due to some disturbance such as lust, in order to cause harm to others.

4. *Maraṇāntika*. Expansion culminating in death (*maraṇa*), in which a soul temporarily leaves the body and goes to the place where it will reincarnate after death. The soul then contracts back to its body, and the body dies.

5. *Taijasa-samudghāta*. Luminous or fiery expansion, which is of two kinds – *shubha* (good, bright, splendid, auspicious) and *ashubha* (not beautiful, disagreeable, harmful). *Shubha-samudghāta* comes about when a great saint or sage is moved by compassion at the sight of some human suffering or calamity. A white form emanates from his right shoulder, eliminates the source of the suffering or averts the disaster, and returns to the body. *Ashubha-samudghāta* happens when a seemingly advanced ascetic becomes enraged, and wishes to rid himself of the source of his hatred or anger. A red form emanates from his left shoulder, destroys the source of aggravation, and returns once more to his body. Jain, Hindu and Buddhist mythology contains many stories in which *ṛishis* and *munis* perform such deeds.

6. *Āhāraka-samudghāta*. Transference expansion, in which a sage who has reached the sixth *guṇasthāna* (stage of spiritual development) emanates a white, man-like form in order to visit a fully omniscient sage. The purpose of the visit is either to clear some doubt or difficulty or simply to enjoy the presence of the omniscient sage.

7. *Kevalin-samudghāta*. The expansion of a *kevalin* (omniscient one) who has reached the thirteenth *guṇasthāna*, in which the soul particles expand to fill the entire *lokākāsha* (universe comprised of space). According to Jain philosophy, every *jīva* is essentially eternal and infinite, and pervades all points in space. *Kevalin-samudghāta* is when the soul expands to become aware of its all-pervasive nature.

The purpose of *kevalin-samudghāta* is to equalize the duration of the four *aghātiyā* (non-harmful) *karmas* that keep the soul in the body for as long as the soul continues to live in this world. These *karmas* do not stand in the way of omniscience; they are the *karmas* that any realized soul must have in order to remain in the body. When the *aghātiyā karmas* that determine the bodily lifespan are of a shorter duration than the three *karmas* that determine the formation of the body, its social and family status, and the pleasant or unpleasant feelings that it will experience, then the soul of the *kevalin* expands throughout the entire *lokākāsha* in four moments of time (*samayas*, the

minutest part of time), following which it withdraws in a further four moments. This equalizes the duration of the four types of *karma*, which prepares the soul to enter the fourteenth and final *guṇasthāna*. The process is described by Āchārya Umāswāmī in his *Prashamarati Prakaraṇa* and summarized by Yajñeshwar Shastri:

*Samudghāta* is performed by a *kevalin* to equalize the duration of all four *aghātiyā karmas*. Eight *samayas* are required to perform this *samudghāta*. The process is like this: in the first *samaya*, the *kevalin* emanates the *pradeshas* (tiny particles) of his soul, and turns them into a mace (*daṇḍa*), which touches both the upper and lower ends of the universe (*loka*). In the second *samaya*, he converts this mace into a door (*kapāṭa*), which extends eastwards and westwards. In the third *samaya*, he constructs a churning stick (*manthāna*) by extending the *pradeshas* (particles) of the soul employed in the creation of this door into north and south directions. In the fourth *samaya*, he fills the gaps therein and thereby pervades the entire universe (*lokavyāpi*). In this manner, in these four *samayas*, the *kevalin* equalizes the four *aghātiyā karmas*. Then, in the fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth *samayas*, he restores the *pradeshas* of the soul that were used for filling gaps, for creating the churning stick, the door, and the mace. Then the *pradeshas* of his soul once again pervade his normal body.

Yajñeshwar Shastri, on Āchārya Umāswāmī,  
*Prashamarati Prakaraṇa* 273–74; cf. UVPP p.22

See also: **karma (in Jainism)** (3.2).

**samyag-dṛishṭi, samyag-darshana** (S), **sammā-diṭṭhi, sammā-dassana** (Pa/Pk), **yang dag pa'i lta ba** (T), **zhèngjiàn** (C), **shōken** (J) *Lit.* right (*samyāñc, yang dag, zhèng, shō*) view (*darshana, dṛishṭi, lta, jiàn, ken*); right viewpoint, right vision, right perception, right belief, right understanding; complete view, complete vision; also, as *samyag-dṛishṭi* and *sammā-diṭṭhi*, a right believer – a person who has acquired a ‘right view’.

In the Hindu and yogic traditions, *samyag-darshana* is mystical or inner vision. According to the *Yoga Bhāshya*, *samyag-darshana* is the way to liberation from suffering, after elimination of its five causes (*kleshas*, impurities).<sup>1</sup> The *Manu Smṛiti* maintains that a person with *samyag-darshana* is not bound by his deeds or *karma*.<sup>2</sup>

In both Jain and Buddhist traditions, *samyag-dṛishṭi* is a more common expression than *samyag-darshana*. In Jainism, *samyag-dṛishṭi* is one of the three fundamentals (*ratna-traya*, three gems) of Jain philosophy and practice, the other two being *samyag-jñāna* (right knowledge) and *samyak-chāritra*



(right conduct). *Samyag-dṛishṭi* is commonly regarded as synonymous with *samyaktva* (completeness, perfection, rightness), where it is contrasted with *mithyā-dṛishṭi* (false view, false belief) and *mithyātvā* (unreality, illusion). A number of compound terms are equivalent to their *samyaktva* counterparts. These include:

*Avirata samyag-dṛishṭi*. Belief in the path to liberation, but lacking the discipline (*avirata*) to act upon it; a stage of partial self-control.

*Upashama samyag-dṛishṭi*. Right belief arising from suppression (*upashama*) of faith-deluding (*darshana-mohanīya*) *karma* and the resulting four passions.

*Kshayika samyag-dṛishṭi*. Complete destruction (*kshayika*) of the *karma* that obscures right belief.

*Samyag-dṛishṭi* is featured among the first five stages (*guṇasthānas*) of spiritual evolution. Passage between these stages is governed by the degree to which a soul is burdened by *karma* and its associated passions. In these five stages, the soul rises and falls according to its attractions towards the illusory life of the senses (*i.e. mithyā-dṛishṭi*), on the one hand, and liberation and omniscience, on the other. Āchārya Kundakunda (traditionally dated to C2nd–3rd CE) writes of a person who is fully established in right belief:

One who is established in right belief (*sammā-diṭṭhi*) prevents the inflow of *karma*. There is therefore neither influx of *karma* nor its resulting bondage. Remaining free from new karmic bondage, he understands the previously binding *karma* (to be different from the self).

*Kundakunda, Samayasāra 166; cf. AKKS p.323*

The matter is summarized in the twentieth-century *Samansuttam*:

Persons possessed of right faith (*sammā-diṭṭhi*) are free from doubt and are therefore fearless. Because of their freedom from the seven fears, they are free from doubt.

A person who has no longing for the fruits of *karma*, nor for any thing or its properties, is possessed of right faith (*sammā-diṭṭhi*), with a mind free from any longing....

He who is completely devoid of delusion as to the nature of things is certainly understood to be the non-deluded right believer (*sammā-diṭṭhi*).

*Samansuttam 232–33, 237; cf. SSJV*

The seven fears are fear of this world, of the next world, of sickness, of death, of being without protection, of being defenceless, and of the unexpected.

In Buddhism, *sammā-diṭṭhi* refers to acceptance and deep understanding of the four noble truths (*cattāri ariya-saccāni*) that form the basis of Buddhist doctrine. The four axioms are: there is suffering; suffering has an origin; suffering can cease; and there is a path that leads to the cessation of suffering. The path leading to the cessation of suffering is known as the noble eightfold path.

*Sammā-diṭṭhi* is also the first of the eight aspects of the noble eightfold path (*ariyāṭṭhangika-magga*) that are outlined at many places in Buddhist texts. It is said that *sammā-diṭṭhi* is the basis of all good qualities from which the other seven aspects arise sequentially:

*Bhikkhus*, just as dawn is the forerunner and first indication of the rising sun, so is right view (*sammā-diṭṭhi*) the forerunner and first indication of wholesome qualities (*kusalā-dhammā*). In one of right view (*sammā-diṭṭhi*), *bhikkhus*, right intention arises. In one of right intention, right speech arises. In one of right speech, right action arises. In one of right action, right livelihood arises. In one of right livelihood, right effort arises. In one of right effort, right mindfulness arises. In one of right mindfulness, right concentration arises. In one of right concentration, right knowledge arises. In one of right knowledge, right deliverance (*vimutti*) arises.

*Anguttara Nikāya* 10:121, *Pubbangama Sutta*, *PTSA5* pp.236–37; cf. *NDBB* p.1503

Likewise, from wrong view arise wrong intention, wrong speech, and so on.<sup>3</sup>

As the foundation of good qualities, the *Sammādiṭṭhi Sutta* of the *Majjhima Nikāya* says that a person of right view (*sammā-diṭṭhi*) understands that “killing living beings”, “taking what is not given”, “lustful misconduct”, “false”, “malicious” and harsh speech, “gossip”, “greed”, “hatred” and “wrong view (*micchā-diṭṭhi*)” are all wrong or “unwholesome (*akusala*)” and are rejected by a person of right view. Such a person not only understands the four noble truths regarding suffering, but also understands the nature of “aging and death”, “birth”, “existence”, “clinging”, “craving”, and all the other fundamental aspects of Buddhist teaching.<sup>4</sup>

It is also said that there are two levels of *sammā-diṭṭhi* – the mundane (Pa. *lokiya*, S. *laukika*) and the transcendental or supramundane (Pa. *lokuttara*, S. *lokottara*).<sup>5</sup> *Lokiya sammā-diṭṭhi* is concerned with living correctly in this world. Here, as a monk comes to see material existence as it really is – impermanent, a source of suffering, and lacking an enduring ‘self’ – he becomes increasingly compassionate and generous in nature, imbibing all the good human qualities. However, this kind of *sammā-diṭṭhi* is still touched by human defects. *Lokuttara sammā-diṭṭhi* concerns transcendental

existence and is associated with the four stages of the *ariya-puggala* (noble person). These four stages are those of the stream-enterer (*sotāpanna*), the once-returner (*sakadāgāmī*), the non-returner (*anāgāmī*), and the enlightened one (*arahanta*, worthy one). Each stage represents the conquest or shedding, to an increasing degree, of all the fetters (*saṃyojanas*), defilements (*āsavas*) and impurities (*kilesas*) that bind living beings to the cycle of birth and death.

In the *Dhammapada*, the Buddha puts it simply:

Those who see wrong as wrong and right as right  
embrace true doctrines (*sammā-diṭṭhi*)  
and enter a realm of bliss (*suggati*).

*Dhammapada* 22:14; cf. DPN, DPR

Understood broadly, *samyag-dṛiṣṭi* is a complete and unprejudiced view of the whole of things, as they really are, as opposed to a narrow, personal perspective. This begins with an appreciation of the difference between right and wrong, and culminates in the highest wisdom of full enlightenment.

See also: **ḍṛiṣṭi**, **guṇasthāna**, **mithyā-ḍṛiṣṭi**, **mithyātva**, **samyaktva**.

1. *Yoga Bhāṣya* 2:15.
2. *Manu Smṛiti* 6:74.
3. E.g. *Anguttara Nikāya* 10:103, *Micchatta Sutta*, PTSA5 pp.211–12.
4. E.g. *Majjhima Nikāya* 9, *Sammādiṭṭhi Sutta*, PTSM1 pp.46–55; cf. *MDBB* pp.132–44.
5. See e.g. *Majjhima Nikāya* 117, *Mahācattārīsaka Sutta*, PTSM3 p.72, and associated commentary in the *Majjhima Nikāya Aṭṭhakathā*.

**samyak-sambodhi** (S), **sammā-sambodhi** (Pa), **yang dag par rdzogs pa'i byang chub** (T), **zhèngděng jué** (C), **shōtōgaku** (J) *Lit.* full (*samyañc*, *yang dag par*) complete (*sam*, *rdzogs pa*) enlightenment (*bodhi*, *byang chub*, *jué*, *gaku*); highest (*zhèngděng*, *shōtō*) enlightenment. See **sambodhi**.

**samyaktva** (S), **sammatta** (Pa/Pk) *Lit.* completeness, perfection, rightness, goodness, righteousness; in Jainism, right belief, right viewpoint, right attitude; firm faith in the path of liberation from the cycle of birth and death, as laid down by the twenty-four Jain *Tīrthankaras* (teachers); the first step on the path to liberation; the inherent and firm faith of the soul; unwavering spiritual intention; realization of the soul's own natural and spiritual faith – a state or quality of being that is more than mere belief in the tenets of the

Jain doctrine; the converse of *mithyātva* (incorrect belief, false faith, wrong viewpoint, wrong perception); also called *shraddhā guṇa* (quality of faith).<sup>1</sup>

The term also appears in Buddhist texts, where it is used in a general sense for goodness, rightness, or righteousness. *Sammatta-niyāma* (certainty of righteousness), *i.e.* certainty (*niyāma*) of attaining *sammatta*, for instance, which appears in the Pali texts,<sup>2</sup> is said in commentarial literature such as the *Sāratthappakāsinī*<sup>3</sup> to imply the noble eightfold path of the Buddha, which leads inevitably to perfect righteousness (*sammatta*) or *nibbāna*. Likewise, *Mahāyāna* Buddhist philosopher Nāgārjuna (c. 150–250 CE) says that *samyaktva*, as the ultimate goodness, the supreme or absolute good, refers to *nirvāṇa*, while *samyaktva niyāma* is the certainty (*niyāma*) that *samyaktva* or *nirvāṇa* will be attained.<sup>4</sup>

It is in the Jain tradition that *samyaktva* finds its greatest elaboration. The term has been variously defined and described by Jain *āchāryas* (teachers) of the past as well as more modern scholars and commentators. Hemachandra defines *samyaktva* as, “faith in the right *deva* (god, *i.e.* the archetypal *Jina*), the right *guru*, and the right *dharma* (path)”;<sup>5</sup> the monk Chāmuṇḍarāya (fl. c. 1000 CE) describes it as, “faith in the path to liberation shown by the *Jina*”;<sup>6</sup> and Haribhadra defines it as, “faith in the truths enunciated by the *Tīrthankara*”.<sup>7</sup> Samantabhadra (C5th CE), Vasunandin (c. 1100 CE), Somadeva Sūri (C10th CE) and others consider *samyaktva* to be faith in the three fundamentals of Jain belief, *i.e.* the *Āpta* (the *Jina*, “the lord of the universe and benefactor of all creatures”<sup>8</sup>), the *āgama* (scriptures), and the nine *tattvas* or *padārthas* (basic principles).<sup>9</sup> Somadeva devotes an entire section of his *Yashastilaka* to the subject of *samyaktva*, which he describes as the foundation upon which the quest for liberation is conducted. *Samyaktva* “is the prime cause of salvation, just as the foundation is the mainstay of a palace, good luck that of beauty, life that of bodily enjoyment, royal power that of victory, culture that of nobility, and policy that of government”.<sup>10</sup>

*Samyaktva* is generally said to have the same meaning as *samyag-darshana* or *samyag-dṛishṭi* (right viewpoint, right belief, right faith). *Samyag-darshana* is the first of three fundamentals (*ratna-traya*, three gems) of Jain philosophy and practice, the other two being *samyag-jñāna* (right knowledge) and *samyak-chāritra* (right conduct, virtuous conduct). Expressing a widely held opinion, the *Uttarādhyayana Sūtra* maintains that *samyaktva* comes first. Right knowledge is founded upon right belief (*samyaktva*); right conduct is founded upon right knowledge; and without right conduct there is no possibility of liberation (*moksha*).<sup>11</sup> Samantabhadra similarly observes that on the path to liberation *samyaktva* leads the way to right knowledge and right conduct, and therefore assumes a natural precedence over them.<sup>12</sup> Since *samyaktva* is essential for the presence of *samyag-jñāna* and *samyak-chāritra*, it is sometimes said that *samyaktva* comprises all three.

*Samyaktva* arises naturally in a soul when *darshana-mohanīya* (faith-deluding) *karma* is suppressed or eradicated. Prior to this, the soul is bound

by the stages in which true faith is either altogether absent or comes and goes, with a greater or lesser frequency. According to Jain philosophy, *mithyātva* arises from and results in an influx (*āsrava*) of karmic matter, while *samyaktva* is one of the five means of checking the inflow. The other four means are: *vrata* (vows), *apramāda* (mindfulness), *akashāya* (absence of passions), and *ayoga* (absence of activity, stilling the otherwise constant activity of mind and body).

As a fundamental aspect of Jain philosophy, Jain *āchāryas* have analysed and categorized *samyaktva* into what they have each understood to be its component parts, enumerating six primary constituents. These are: *guṇas* (attributes, qualities); *angas* (limbs, parts, good qualities); *doshas* (imperfections or negative tendencies to be avoided); *lingas* (characteristics); *bhūṣhaṇas* (excellences, good qualities); and *atichāra* (infringements or transgressions to be avoided). Of these, the *guṇas*, *angas* and *doshas* are described by *āchāryas* of the *Digambara* tradition; the *lingas* and *bhūṣhaṇas* are categories first mentioned by the *Shvetāmbara* Hemachandra (C12th CE),<sup>13</sup> although the individual items in these categories are listed elsewhere by other *āchāryas*; and the *atichāras* are common to both traditions. Each category is comprised of several items, and items appearing in one category may appear in another category as presented by another writer.

Chāmuṇḍarāya, Amitagati (C10th), Vasunandin and other *Digambara* teachers and commentators write of eight *guṇas*. Four of these are listed by the *Shvetāmbara* Hemachandra as *lingas* and one as a *bhūṣhaṇa*. The explanations of particular items often vary from writer to writer, though without necessarily contradicting each other. A few of these explanations and their authors are given below.<sup>14</sup> The eight *guṇas* are:

1. *Samvega*. Spiritual longing; unwavering attachment to *Deva* (God, *i.e.* the *Jina*), the *guru*, and the *dharma* (path) (Amitagati); persistent fear of transmigration (Pūjyapāda, c. C6th CE); the desire for liberation (*moksha*), arising from the realization of the transient and unsatisfying nature of the world and its seeming pleasures (Hemachandra).
2. *Shama, upashama*. Tranquillity, calmness; inner peace arising from the stilling of the passions (Hemachandra).
3. *Nirveda*. Disgust, loathing; distaste for worldly things (Amitagati).
4. *Bhakti*. Devotion; devotion to the *Jinas* and to the *guru* (Amitagati); classified by Hemachandra as a *bhūṣhaṇa*.
5. *Anukampā*. Compassion; the desire to eliminate suffering without partiality; tenderheartedness, together with the taking of practical steps to eliminate or alleviate suffering wherever one can (Hemachandra).

6. *Nindā*. Remorse; the remorse experienced by a spiritually minded person when he has committed an act motivated by some negative passion for the sake of someone dear to him, such as a family member (Amitagati).
7. *Garhā*. Repentance; confession to a *guru* of wrongs committed under the influence of the passions (Amitagati).
8. *Vātsalya*. Lovingkindness; wholehearted affection and assistance given to all members of the Jain community, like that of a cow for its calf (Chāmuṇḍarāya).

Hemachandra's five *lingas* are *shama*, *saṃvega*, *nirveda*, *anukampā* and lastly *āstikya* (belief, faithfulness), which is maintaining a belief in Jain philosophy even when confronted by contrary doctrines.

Samantabhadra, Somadeva, Amṛitachandra (c.C11th CE) and other *Digambaras* have listed eight *angas*:

1. *Niḥshanka*. Freedom from fear or doubt (*shanka* can mean both); a determination as "rigid as the temper of steel" to follow the spiritual path (Samantabhadra); freedom from doubt concerning the path of the *Jina* (Amṛitachandra). Fear (*bhaya*) is subdivided by Chāmuṇḍarāya into seven categories: fear of this world, of the next world, of sickness, of death, of being without protection, of being defenceless, and of the unexpected.
2. *Niḥkāṅkshā*. Desirelessness; absence of a desire for worldly pleasures, which are short-lived, sinful, and accompanied by suffering (Samantabhadra); either absence of craving for sensual pleasures in this or in a future life or absence of interest in false doctrines (Chāmuṇḍarāya and Amṛitachandra). Somadeva Sūri adds that to exchange *samyaktva* for worldly pleasures is like trading a ruby for buttermilk.
3. *Nirvichikitsā*. Overcoming of repugnance; love of virtue without repugnance for the body (Samantabhadra); discarding the false notion that the body is pure by understanding its impurity (Chāmuṇḍarāya).
4. *Amūḍha-dṛiṣṭi*. Unswerving orthodoxy; refusal to accept any wrong belief in thought, word, or deed (Samantabhadra).
5. *Prabhāvanā*. Good deeds; dissemination of Jain doctrines and the promotion of its reputation; giving in charity, building temples, celebrating Jain festivals (Somadeva Sūri); asceticism, worship (Amṛitachandra), *etc.*; listed by Hemachandra as a *bhūṣaṇa*.

6. *Upagūhana*. Concealing, embracing; edification; maturing of faith through the cultivation of forbearance (*kshamā*) and other Jain principles (Chāmundaṛāya and Amṛitachandra), also concealing the weaknesses of fellow Jains as “a mother conceals the failings of her children”, although the Jain religion will not be sullied by one unworthy follower, any more than a pond is fouled by one dead frog (Somadeva Sūri).
7. *Sthiti-karaṇa*. Strengthening of faith; reaffirmation of the faith of those who are wavering, brought about by good men who are full of lovingkindness (Samantabhadra); equivalent to Hemachandra’s *sthairya-bhūṣaṇa* (good quality of steadfastness).
8. *Vātsalya*. Lovingkindness; also listed as one of the *guṇas*.

Several *Digambara* teachers have mentioned eight *doshas* (imperfections) to be avoided. They are the opposites of the *angas*:

1. *Shanka*. Doubt, fear.
2. *Kāṅkshā*. Desire.
3. *Vichikitsā*. Repugnance.
4. *Mūḍha-dṛishṭi*. False belief arising from the passions.
5. *Aprabhāvanā*. Not doing good works.
6. *Anupagūhana*. Non-edification.
7. *Asthiti-karaṇa*. Not strengthening faith.
8. *Avātsalya*. Unkindness.

The five *atichāras* are equivalent to the first four *doshas*. The last two are essentially the same, and have provided many Jain writers with the opportunity to list and criticize the beliefs of other traditions, especially Buddhists and Hindus. The five *atichāras* are:

1. *Shanka*. Doubt.
2. *Kāṅkshā*. Desire.
3. *Vichikitsā*. Repulsion.
4. *Para-pāshaṇḍi-prashaṃsā*. Admiring the followers of other creeds.
5. *Para-pāshaṇḍi-saṃstava*. Praising the followers of other creeds.

Hemachandra’s list of *bhūṣaṇas* are:

1. *Sthairya*. Steadfastness, firmness; the equivalent of *sthiti-karaṇa* (strengthening of faith).
2. *Kaushala*. Being well versed in Jain doctrine.

3. *Tīrtha-sevā*. Service (*sevā*) at Jain pilgrimage sites (*tīrtha*), such as places where *Tīrthankaras* are believed to have been born or to have received enlightenment.
4. *Bhakti*. Devotion.
5. *Prabhāvanā*. Good deeds; dissemination of Jain doctrine.

*Samyaktva* has also been described as the absence of the twenty-five *doshas* (imperfections), while others have identified and categorized the positive attributes of which *samyaktva* is comprised. The twenty-five *doshas* consist of:

<i>Mada</i>	Vanity; eight varieties.
<i>Mūḍhatā</i>	Foolish ideas or superstitious beliefs; three varieties.
<i>Anāyatana</i>	Disrespect; six varieties.
<i>Dosha</i>	Imperfections; eight varieties.

To these, the Prakrit *Ratnasāra* adds a further nineteen, raising the total to forty-four. The additions comprise seven kinds of fear (*bhaya*), seven vices (*vyasana*), and the five transgressions (*atichāra*).

*Samyaktva* itself is also qualified and categorized in a number of other ways, the commonest being a threefold division presented by various *Digambara* teachers. The three categories depend upon the burden of *karma* that remains upon the incarnate soul and the resulting activity of the four passions to which it is subject. As such they can be linked with fourteen stages (*guṇasthānas*) of spiritual evolution, which begin with a complete absence of understanding (*mithyātva*, false belief) of spiritual life and the nature of human existence, and culminate in *kevala-jñāna* (omniscience). The three categories are:

*Upashama samyaktva*. *Samyaktva* arising from the suppression (*upashama*) of faith-deluding (*darshana-mohanīya*) *karma* and the resulting four passions.

*Kshayopama samyaktva*. *Samyaktva* arising from the partial destruction (*kshayopama*) and suppression of *darshana-mohanīya karma*.

*Kshayika samyaktva*. *Samyaktva* arising from complete destruction (*kshayika*) of *darshana-mohanīya karma* and its associated passions. This is the true or highest *samyaktva*, which will ultimately lead to liberation.

Other aspects of *samyaktva* include:

*Sāsvādana samyaktva*. A momentary taste of *samyaktva* that is soon replaced by wrong belief (*mithyātva*).



*Samyaktva prakṛiti*. Partially clouded *samyaktva*; *samyaktva* obscured to some extent by human nature (*prakṛiti*); *samyaktva* tinged with wrong belief.

*Samyaktva kriyā*. Action (*kriyā*) that strengthens *samyaktva*, such as worship, meditation, etc.

*Avirata samyaktva*. *Samyaktva* without (*a*) discipline (*virata*); inability to act on a belief in the path to liberation; *samyaktva* without taking the vows to act upon it; the fourth of the fourteen stages (*guṇasthāna*) of spiritual progress, also called *avirata samyag-dṛishṭi guṇasthāna*. It denotes the stage at which the soul, beginning to glimpse the spiritual truth, knows right from wrong, but nonetheless lacks the willpower and spiritual strength to always follow what is right and to take any vows. Having reached this stage, a soul is assured of attaining liberation (*moksha*) or *nirvāṇa* one day, though it may take a very long time.

*Nisarga samyaktva*. *Samyaktva* acquired by ‘nature (*nisarga*)’, i.e. as a natural result of spiritual progress in a past life.

*Adhigama samyaktva*. *Samyaktva* by acquisition (*adhigama*), acquired as a result of some external cause, such as contact with a *guru* or exposure to Jain doctrine and scriptures.

Tedious and confusing as these various lists and categories may be to an outsider not of the faith, they provide an insight into the way that esteemed Jain teachers of the past have understood their creed. *Samyaktva* is viewed as the cornerstone of the Jain tradition, the basis upon which aspirations to enlightenment are founded. The intense analysis, with its lists, categories and classifications, is characteristic of Jain philosophy, as it is of early Buddhism. It seems to have been a part of the mindset of those ancient times.

See also: **guṇasthāna**, **mithyātva**, **samyag-dṛishṭi**.

1. Much of what follows has been drawn from the summaries of R. Williams, *Jaina Yoga*, *JYMS* pp.41–50 and B.K. Khadabadi, *Sravakacara*, *SJCC*.
2. E.g. *Samyutta Nikāya* 25:1–10, *Okkantisaṃyutta*, *PTSS3* pp.225–28.
3. Cf. also *Paṭisambhidāmagga* 1:590, *PTSP1* p.124, *PDPM* p.126.
4. E.g. Nāgārjuna, *Mahāprajñāpāramitā Shāstra* 39, *T25* 1509:239a, *TVW3* p.1261.
5. Hemachandra, *Yoga Shāstra* 2:2; cf. in *JYMS* p.41.
6. Chāmuṇḍarāya, *Chārītrasāra*, *CSCM* p.2; cf. in *JYMS* p.41.
7. Haribhadra, *Shrāvaka-dharma-pañchāshaka* 3; cf. in *JYMS* p.41.
8. Somadeva Sūri, *Yashastilaka* 6:2.3, in *YICH* p.248.

9. E.g. Vasunandin, *Shrāvākāchāra* 4, in *SJCC*.
10. Somadeva Sūri, *Yashastilaka* 6, in *YICH* p.248.
11. *Uttarādhyayana Sūtra* 28:28–30, *SBE45* p.156.
12. Samantabhadra, *Ratnakaraṇḍa Shrāvākāchāra* 1:31–32.
13. Hemachandra, *Yoga Shāstra* 2:15–16.
14. For references to sources, see R. Williams, *Jaina Yoga*, *JYMS* pp.xxvii–xxix, 41–50.

**saṃyam(a)** (S/H), **sanjam** (Pu) *Lit.* with (*sam*) restraint (*yama*); control, abstention, restriction, self-restraint, as in control of the mind's tendency to spread its attention into the senses (*indriya-saṃyama*) and *prāṇa-saṃyama* (control of the *prāṇa*); unity, union, equality, equipoise, equanimity as in union with the Divine. *Saṃyama* is also one of the six *karmas* (*śat-karma*) or daily duties of the Jain laity, as a replacement for the more stringent six *āvashyakas* recommended for Jain monks.

Using *saṃyama* in the sense of union with *Brahman*, the *Muṇḍaka Upanishad* says:

When the seer beholds the self-effulgent Being (*Purusha*) –  
 who is the Lord, the maker, and the source of *Brahman* –  
 Then that wise one, shaking off good and evil, becomes stainless,  
 and attains supreme union (*saṃyama*).

*Muṇḍaka Upanishad* 3:1.3

*Saṃyama* is also a term used extensively by Patañjali in his *Yoga Sūtras* for the kind of profound concentration and meditation that leads to the attainment of miraculous powers (*siddhis*). Patañjali identifies three states of the mind – fixation or concentration (*dhāraṇā*), visualization or contemplation (*dhyaṇa*), and superconscious absorption (*samādhi*). These three, he says, brought together in one mind, constitute *saṃyama* or deep meditation.<sup>1</sup>

See also: **ashtāṅga yoga** (8.5), **saṃyama** (•4), **saṃyama** (7.3).

1. Patañjali, *Yoga Sūtras* 3:1ff.

**saṃyog(a)** (S/H), **sanjog** (Pu) *Lit.* together (*sam*) + union (*yoga*); joining, conjunction, combination, association, integration; bondage, fetters; the union or joining together of two previously separate things; used in a wide variety of contexts.

*Saṃyoga* can refer to the conjunction of the soul with the body and its passions under the influence of *karma*. In this sense, *saṃyoga* means bondage. Hence, in Jainism, *saṃyoga kevalin guṇasthāna* (stage of oneness

with bondage) refers to liberation or oneness (*kevalin*), while still remaining bound to the body. It is the equivalent of *jīvanmukti* (liberation while living). Describing one who has entered deep meditation, the Buddha says, “All fetters (*saṃyoga*) vanish of him who knows all.”<sup>1</sup>

This union and bondage, however, is by divine design:

He is the Source,  
the Cause that brings union (*saṃyoga*) (between spirit and matter).

*Shvetāshvatara Upanishad 6:5*

On the other hand, from the human perspective, the individual himself is responsible for his bondage:

The embodied one (*dehī*), according to his nature, assumes many forms, gross and subtle. Through the nature of his own actions and the nature of his own mind, he is himself the cause of his union (*saṃyoga*) with these forms; consequently, he sees himself as something other (than what he really is).

*Shvetāshvatara Upanishad 5:12*

From the viewpoint of this world, the Lord is neither the cause nor the creator of *karma*, nor of the union (*saṃyoga*) of *karma* with its fruit. It is our innate nature (*svabhāva*) that does all this.

*Bhagavad Gītā 5:14*

The result of this illusion is suffering:

The cause of pain is union (*saṃyoga*) of the Self with not-Self.

*Patañjali, Yoga Sūtras 2:17, TYPY p.185*

And the path to liberation from bondage is *yoga*:

Know that severance of the connection (*saṃyoga*) with pain is what is called *yoga* (union). It has to be practised tirelessly, with determination.

*Bhagavad Gītā 6:23; cf. BGT*

Mystics have also used the term for the union of the soul with God:

By establishing union (*saṃyoga*) with God,  
the defects of all living beings are removed.

*Vallabhāchārya, Srāvaṇasyānlale pakshe; cf. in SSI5 pp.120–21*

He implants the *mantra* of the Lord’s Name,  
and eradicates the illness of egotism.

O Nānak, he alone meets the *satguru*,  
 who has such union (*sanjog*) pre-ordained.  
*Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 957, AGK*

The soul is now attached to the Word (*Shabd*),  
 and separation (*viyog*) has come to an end.  
 With great good fortune have you been blessed  
 with such an easy attainment of union (*sahaj jog*).  
 How could such a union (*sanjog*) be attained without a *guru*?  
 So now enjoy the bliss of the Sound (*Shabd*).  
*Swami Shiv Dayal Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 37:15.2–3, SBP p.325*

*Sanjog* is also contrasted with *vijog* or *viyog* (separation). Both have been a part of creation from the very beginning:

Union (*sanjog*) and separation (*vijog*)  
 are ordained by the primal Lord God.  
*Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 1007, AGK*

Union (*sanjog*) and separation (*vijog*)  
 are pre-ordained by the Creator.  
*Guru Amardās, Ādi Granth 1058, AGK*

1. *Dhammapada* 26:2.

**sanctity** (L. *sanctitas*) The state or condition of being holy, sacred, or saintly; holiness; sacredness; the natural state of the soul, which is inherently one with the Divine.

The unknown author of *The Way of a Pilgrim*, referring to the allegory of Adam in the Garden of Eden, where man is said to be made in the image of God, describes sanctity as primal spiritual “innocence”:<sup>1</sup>

Now what is the meaning of sanctity? For the sinner it means nothing else than a return through effort and discipline to the state of innocence of the first man.

*The Way of a Pilgrim, WPW p.45*

The Romanian Orthodox Christian priest, theologian and professor Dumitru Stăniloae (1903–1993) describes the process of sanctification in more detail. Stăniloae’s description is coloured by the Christian doctrine that, while the soul can attain union with God, it remains eternally other than Him, unable to merge entirely into the divine Unity:

The fathers saw sanctity as an ever-increasing likeness of man to God, brought about by the purification of the passions, and by growth in the virtues which culminate in boundless love. This implies a deepening of the human conscience, illuminated by the light of the consciousness of God. According to the fathers, the virtues are attributes of God in their human expression; that is, they are the ever-deepening reflection of His light, His consciousness, in the consciousness of man. Through the virtues, God first of all becomes man in man, and then He causes man to become God. This means that, through the virtues, human consciousness never ceases to expand. The virtues are the wings on which man soars ever higher into the light of God, while his conscience descends even deeper. But he is never dissolved in God. He is able, and feels the need, to fly to an ever-greater height, constantly to assimilate more of the good things of God, to let his consciousness expand – for all being culminates eternally in God, the Source of all good, the infinite Source of all consciousness or light.

Thus, the likeness of man to God, in which holiness consists, is precisely this continuous movement of man into God, this ever more intense mutual interpenetration, ever more brilliant enlightenment of human conscience by the infinitely luminous conscience of God. Holiness is that transparency whereby the spirit of man, filled completely with the light of the Holy Spirit, is reflected through his body and radiates around him. This radiance of the divine consciousness extends even to his face and to his actions.

*Dumitru Stăniloae, Prayer and Holiness 3, PHI pp.15–16*

See also: **holiness, union with God.**

1. *Genesis* 1:26–27, 2:1ff.

**saññā-vedayita-nirodha** (Pa), **saṃjñā-vedayita-nirodha** (S), **'du shes dang tshor ba 'gog pa** (T), **xiǎngshòu miè** (C), **sōjumetsu** (J) *Lit.* cessation (*nirodha*, 'gog, miè, metsu) of knowing (*saññā*, 'du shes, xiǎng, sō) and (*dang*) feeling (*vedayita*, *tshor ba*, *shòu*, *ju*); cessation of cognition and feeling; in Pali Buddhist texts, the cessation of all feeling and cognition that arises on transcending the four lower and four higher *jhānas* (states of meditative absorption),<sup>1</sup> which are equivalent to *rūpaloka* (realm of subtle forms, patterns, or archetypes) and *arūpaloka* (formless or immaterial realm); extinction, *nirvāṇa*; also called *nirodha-samāpatti* (attainment of cessation). See **jhāna** (8.5), **nirodha**.

1. E.g. *Majjhima Nikāya*, *Laṭukikopama Sutta* (66), *Nivāpa Sutta* (25), *Ariyapariyesanā Sutta* (26), *Mahāsakuludāyī Sutta* (77), *PTSM1* pp.160, 175, 456, *PTSM2* p.13.

**sārūpya mukti** (S/H) See **sāyujya mukti**.

**sarvajñāna**, **sarvajñāna-jñāna**, **sarvajñatā** (S), **sabbaññutā**, **sabbaññutā-ñāṇa** (Pa), **kun shes**, **thams cad mkhyen pa** (T), **yīqièzhì** (C), **issaichi** (J)  
*Lit.* all (*sarva*, *thams cad*, *kun*, *yīqiè*, *issai*) knowledge (*jñāna*, *ñāṇa*, *mkhyen*, *shes*, *zhì*, *chì*); omniscience (*sarvajñatā*, *sabbaññutā*, *thams cad mkhyen*); all-knowing, omniscient (*sarvajñāna*, *sabbaññutā*); to know (*jñā*) all (*sarva*) things (*tā*); total knowledge; an all-encompassing wisdom, knowledge, consciousness, awareness, or gnosis from which nothing is excluded; the omniscience of a *buddha* or enlightened person, comprising awareness and understanding of all aspects of both the phenomenal world and *nirvāṇa*; related to *sarvajña* (omniscient). *Sarvajñāna* is also used as an epithet of the Buddha.

Everything is known to an enlightened being. According to the Buddhist philosopher Nāgārjuna (c. 150–250), “Omniscience (*sarvajñāna*) is a universal wisdom from which nothing can escape.”<sup>1</sup> He also quotes an unattributed verse:

The Buddha has omniscience (*sarvajñāna*) as his chariot,  
 by means of the eightfold noble path, he has gone to *nirvāṇa*.  
*Unattributed, Mahāprajñāpāramitā Shāstra 4, T25 1509:72a, TVW1 p.121*

*Sarvajñāna* and other similar terms are used in some of the analytical texts to differentiate various forms and aspects of omniscience. Considering this line of thought, Étienne Lamotte, a translator of Nāgārjuna, writes:

The prerogative of the *buddhas* is not just sainthood (*arhattva*), but also the possession of supreme perfect awakening (*anuttara-samyak-sambodhi*), omniscience (*sarvajñāna*), and the awareness of things in all their details (*sarvākārajñatā*) put to the service of all beings.  
*Étienne Lamotte, Introduction, Mahāprajñāpāramitā Shāstra, TVW3 p.887*

Regarding the difference between *sarvajñatā* or *sarvākārajñatā*, Nāgārjuna says that the former is general and the other detailed. Describing a *buddha*’s omniscience as *sarvākārajñatā*, and following standard *Mahāyāna* doctrine, he accords a higher spiritual status to teaching *buddhas* than to non-teaching *pratyeka-buddhas*:

Some say ... that *sarvajñatā* and *sarvākārajñatā* are synonymous. Others say that *sarvajñatā* is the awareness of the general characteristics (*sāmānya-lakṣhaṇa*), while *sarvākārajñatā* is the awareness of the specific characteristics (*svalakṣhaṇa*). ... The *shrāvakas* (disciples) and *pratyeka-buddhas* (non-teaching *buddhas* who attain enlightenment for themselves alone) have general omniscience (*sāmānya-sarvajñatā*) only, without awareness of all the details (*sarvākārajñatā*).

Nāgārjuna, *Mahāprajñāpāramitā Shāstra* 42:2.1,  
T25 1509:258c–259a; cf. TVW4 p.1432

And more specifically:

Being endowed with omniscience (*sarvajñāna-samanvāgata*), a *buddha* cognizes clearly and fully the past, the future and the present, perishable things and imperishable things, moveable things and immoveable things – the whole world. That is why he is called a *buddha*.

Nāgārjuna, *Mahāprajñāpāramitā Shāstra* 36:2.1.1, T25 1509:219c; cf. TVW3 p.1097

See also: **sarvajña** (7.3).

1. Nāgārjuna, *Mahāprajñāpāramitā Shāstra* 15, T25 1509:124a, TVW1 p.418.

**sasankhārika-citta** (Pa) *Lit.* induced consciousness (*citta*); a state of mind prompted by prior deliberation, which may have originated from one's own volition and effort or from the instigation, encouragement, or enticement of others; a volitional state of consciousness; contrasted with *asankhārika-citta*, a state of consciousness that arises spontaneously, without deliberation, preparation, premeditation or inducement, either by oneself or others; a term explained in the Pali Buddhist *Abhidhamma* (scholastic analysis of the *suttas*).

The notion of prompted (*sasankhārika*) and unprompted (*asankhārika*) *cittas*, giving rise to prompted or spontaneous acts, probably originated in the *suttas*. In the *Bhumija Sutta* of the *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, for instance, the Buddha explains that the only way to be free from bondage to all actions of body, speech, and mind – whether prompted or unprompted – is to attain *nibbāna*.<sup>1</sup>

See also: **citta**.

1. *Saṃyutta Nikāya* 12:25, *Bhumija Sutta*, PTSS2 pp.40–41; see also *Anguttara Nikāya* 4:171, *Saṇcetanā Sutta*, PTSA2 pp.158–59.

**sassata-dīṭṭhi**, **sassata-vāda** (Pa), **shāshvata-dṛiṣṭi**, **shāshvata-vāda** (S), **rtag lta** (T), **chángjiàn** (C), **jōken** (J) *Lit.* doctrine (*dṛiṣṭi*, *vāda*, *lta*, *jiàn*, *ken*) of eternalism (*shāshvata*, *rtag*, *cháng*, *jō*); eternity belief; view of permanence; belief that the self or soul is eternal and continues to transmigrate from one body to another; contrasted with *uchchheda-dṛiṣṭi* (doctrine of annihilation), which is the belief that the self is annihilated at death and that consequently there is no rebirth or law of *karma*.

*Shāshvata-dṛiṣṭi* and *uchchheda-dṛiṣṭi* are known as the *antagrāha-dṛiṣṭi* (extreme beliefs). The Buddha observed that such extreme viewpoints misrepresent the reality, which is somewhere in the middle.<sup>1</sup> According to the Buddhist view, although some aspects of the individual do continue from one life to the next, there is no self that exists independently of the five *skandhas* (the five constituent elements of being) – there is no eternal, separate soul.

The definitions and refutations of *sassata-dīṭṭhi* given in the Pali *suttas* are somewhat simplistic in the sense that the understanding of the doctrine in the Hindu tradition does not propose that the impermanent self or ego with which the majority of people identify is eternal. On the contrary, as in Buddhism, this superficial ‘self’ is regarded as an illusion. It is believed nevertheless that there is a core or ground of eternal being within everyone that in Indian philosophy is called the *ātman*, the real self or soul. Liberation and enlightenment consists of the realization of the true nature of this *ātman*, which is ultimately discovered to have no identity separate from that of *Brahman*, the supreme Reality. So in that sense, even the Hindu tradition does not believe in a separate and eternal self or soul. Since there cannot be two ultimate Realities, one for Buddhists and another for Hindus, it is axiomatic that the difference between the two perspectives, if indeed there is one, is more intellectual and conceptual than real.

See also: **uccheda-dīṭṭhi**.

1. *E.g. Saṃyutta Nikāya* 12:15, *Kaccānagotta Sutta*, PTSS2 p.17; *Mahāvastu* 3:448, *MHVA*, *MVJ3* p.449.

**satori**, **go** (J), **wù** (C) *Lit.* comprehension, understanding, realization; awakening, enlightenment; *Chán* and *Zen* Buddhist terms for the experience of final enlightenment or for the varying degrees of spiritual awakening, mystical illumination, and deep insight that are experienced along the way; the inner realization of one’s essential *buddha*-nature; the spiritual goal of *Chán* and *Zen* practices; often used synonymously with *kenshō* (J. seeing one’s nature). *Satori* (or sometimes *go*) is the Japanese pronunciation of the Chinese character pronounced as *wù*. In Buddhist contexts, *satori* and the related verb *satoru* (to discern, to comprehend, to know) are also used to translate *jué* (C. to be aware of) and *zhèng* (to realize).



The highest *satori* is depicted as that which is beyond conceptual or verbal description. It is a state of consciousness beyond all analytical and rational thought, beyond words and logic, beyond the dualistic thought processes of the mind. However, the term is also used more generally for any emotional, mental or spiritual influx of clarity and understanding, particularly as regards new insights into one's own nature that illuminate one's path through life. *Satori* can vary in quality and duration from a flash of intuition to the experience of *nirvāṇa*. Eihei Dōgen Zenji (1200–1253), founder of the *Sōtō* school of *Zen* after training in China with Tiāntóng Rújīng of the *Cáodòng* school, explains:

If *satori* arises from any preconception of *satori*, that *satori* will not be reliable. True *satori* does not rely on concepts of *satori*, but comes from far beyond conceptualization. *Satori* is grounded only in *satori* itself, and is assisted only by the power of *satori* itself.

*Eihei Dōgen, Shōbōgenzō, Yui-butsu-yo-butsu, T82 2582:302a;  
cf. in OHTU p.69, SDT4 (91) p.290*

It is said that the inner experience of *satori* gives rise to mental or emotional insights. In most people, this inner influx of higher energy is lost as the mind tries to grasp hold of and examine the insight or new thought. The advanced practitioner, however, is able to hold onto both the spiritual influx and the insights that it brings. Practitioners of *Zen* meditation do not wait for *satori* to come upon them, but actively engage in spiritual practices that will bring it about. As the American *Zen* Buddhist teacher Philip Kapleau (1912–2004) writes:

Like a sprout which emerges from a soil which has been seeded, fertilized, and thoroughly weeded, *satori* comes to a mind that has heard and believed the *buddha*-truth and then uprooted within itself the throttling notion of self-and-other. And just as one must nurture a newly emerged seedling until maturity, so *Zen* training stresses the need to ripen an initial *satori* through subsequent *kōan* (a riddle with no logical solution) practice and/or *shikantaza* (just sitting) until it thoroughly animates one's life. In other words, to function on the higher level of consciousness brought about by *satori*, one must further train oneself to act in accord with this perception of Truth.

*Philip Kapleau, Three Pillars of Zen, TPZK p.190*

The debate concerning whether enlightenment is sudden or gradual was ongoing among early medieval *Chán* and *Zen* Buddhist schools. Gradual awakening (*jiànwù*) implies that enlightenment results from the gradual removal of inner impurities, generally over a number of lifetimes. The notion of sudden awakening (*dùnwù*) is based on the understanding that all beings

are inherently enlightened by virtue of their innate *buddha*-nature (*fóxing*); enlightenment therefore consists in conscious recognition of this truth. In fact, the various schools developed a range of ideas and associated terminology based upon various permutations of the two viewpoints. One commonly mentioned classification suggests that an initial sudden awakening of the understanding (*jiěwù*) that one is indeed a *buddha* is followed by a lengthy period of gradual cultivation (*jiànxīū*), culminating in final realization-awakening (*zhèngwù*). The whole process is known as *dùnwù jiànxīū* (sudden awakening and gradual cultivation), and indicates that initial awakenings are followed by gradual refinement through purification.

Japanese *Zen* Buddhism was more influenced by the Southern School of Chinese *Chán* Buddhism – which believed in enlightenment as a sudden event – than by the Northern School, which understood enlightenment to be the result of gradual spiritual evolution and purification. *Zen* Buddhist teachers who have attempted to induce a sudden enlightenment experience have done so by a variety of means – such as asking a question that has no logical answer (a *kōan*), or answering a question with a paradoxical or nonsensical reply, or shouting into the disciple's ear, or even striking the disciple. These shock methods were drawn from the Southern schools of the late *Táng* (618–907) and early *Sòng* (960–1279) dynasties. The intention was to startle the student out of his conceptual thinking into the realm of pure consciousness, forcing him to rely on his own inner resources.

Much has been said and written about *satori* and all the other terms for enlightenment, but in the end only experience of that state will provide understanding of what it really is.

See also: **kenshō, kōan** (8.5).

**savikalpa jñāna** (S) See **nirvikalpa jñāna**.

**savikalpa samādhi** (S) See **nirvikalpa samādhi**.

**sāyujya mukti** (S/H) *Lit.* liberation (*mukti*) of absorption (*sāyujya*); intimate union with God; complete identification with the Divine; that state of liberation (*mukti*) in which the soul attains perfect union with God; four kinds of *mukti*, increasing in degree, as conceived by the *Dvaita Vedānta* school of Indian philosophy:

1. *Sālokya mukti* in which the soul enjoys divine bliss by being in the same place (*loka*) with God.

2. *Sāmīpya mukti* in which the soul enjoys divine bliss by attaining closeness (*sāmīpya*) to God.
3. *Sārūpya mukti* in which the soul, being utterly pure, enjoys divine bliss by assuming a form (*sārūpya*) similar to God.
4. *Sāyujya mukti* in which all duality is dissolved and the soul, being identical with God, attains perfect divine union by absorption (*sāyujya*) in Him. The soul enjoys divine bliss in eternal communion with God. This is regarded as the highest state of liberation.

Among the various schools of Indian philosophy, *Advaita Vedānta* maintains that when the soul becomes one with *Brahman*, losing its identity, it attains the highest liberation. Rāmānuja (c. 1017–1137), on the other hand, the chief proponent of *Vishishṭa Advaita* (qualified non-dualism), believed that although souls may enjoy the full bliss of the Divine, the soul has an independent existence. “The soul is not pure and impersonal consciousness, but a thinking substance with consciousness as its essential attribute. Hence, *moksha* (liberation) is not self-annulment in the Absolute, but a self-realization through self-surrender and self-effacement – the supreme satisfaction of religious emotion. The liberated soul is not God, but neither is he separated from His all-comprehensive existence. This is *sāyujya bhakti* (unitive devotion).”<sup>1</sup>

The *Dvaita Vedānta* (dualism) propounded by Madhva (c. 1197–1276) says that even souls who have attained the highest liberation only share partially in the highest bliss of God. “To Madhva, the distinction between God and self is real. Though the *jīva* is absolutely dependent upon God, he is active and dynamic. Hence, *moksha* is ‘blessed fellowship’ and not a mere identification. Thus in the state of *mukti*, there is not only the utter absence of pain, but also the presence of positive bliss.”<sup>2</sup>

The other schools of Indian philosophy, each deriving its authority from the *Vedas*, express similarly varying viewpoints. Mystics who have attained liberation, however, might point out that such differentiation is entertained only by conceptualizing philosophers who have not attained union with God.

Swami Tyagisananda explains the meaning of the terms from the perspective of *Advaita Vedānta*. He is commenting on some verses from the *Nārada Bhakti Sūtras*, which say:

The blessed Lord (*Bhagavān*) alone is always to be adored and worshipped by those who are free from all cares and worries, in all aspects of their lives. Being thus glorified, He speedily manifests Himself to His devotees, bringing them realization.

And the *swāmī* comments:

As a result of such *samādhi* (absorption), the Lord manifests himself in all His glory to the *bhakta*'s (devotee's) inner vision, not only in his own heart but in all beings, as a living presence, and not as mere ideas. He now feels that he is living in the same world as God, and this stage of consciousness is denoted by *sālokya mukti*.<sup>3</sup>

He gradually finds himself in the constant company of the Lord when he comes to recognize various objects not merely as the abode of the Lord, but as forms of the Lord Himself. This stage of consciousness is known as *sāmīpya mukti*. The constant companionship of the Lord and uninterrupted absorption in His divine glories gradually transforms the *bhakta* into the likeness of the Lord Himself. . . .<sup>4</sup> This stage of spiritual attainment is known as *sārūpya*.

Ordinarily, *bhaktas* reach this stage only. But this is not the highest stage of *mukti* conceived by *Advaita Vedānta*. Even in this stage, the *bhakta* is separate from *Bhagavān*. The love which brought him nearer and nearer to the Lord has not completed its purpose until there is no separation at all between the two. Even the duality (of nearness) is to be transcended through love. This final culmination is in the hands of the Lord alone, and nothing but God's grace can effect it. The *bhaktas* do not have any desire except to serve the Lord, and enjoy the sweetness of such service.<sup>5</sup> But the Lord in His infinite grace gives his devotee not only the three stages mentioned above, but the final stage of complete absorption in Him where all differences are wiped out once and for all. . . .

The part played by the Lord in leading the devotee to various stages of realization is referred to in this *sūtra*.<sup>6</sup> This last stage is known as *sāyujya* or *ekatva* (oneness). This is the culmination of *mukhya-bhakti*. . . . Many *bhaktas* are afraid of intellectually conceiving this stage, as they think it is sacrilegious to think of the possibility of man really being God Himself. Hence, the misunderstanding of the *Advaita* position by *bhaktas* who want to predicate intellectually an eternal difference between the *jīvātman* and the *Paramātman*.

But whether they like or not, *Bhagavān*, out of His infinite grace, gives even this *sāyujya* to the *bhakta* who has reached the highest stage. Nārada expressly refers to this stage in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* as his own personal experience.<sup>7</sup> See also Nārada's description of the *bhaktas* in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* where he expressly says that they found *Bhagavān*, the world, and their own selves to be one without difference.<sup>8</sup>

*Swami Tyagisananda, on Nārada Bhakti Sūtras 80; cf. NBST pp.242–44*

*Sāyujya* and the other terms are used in similar contexts in the *Upanishads*.<sup>9</sup> The *Mahānārāyaṇa Upanishad* says that the path to the highest liberation is through the mystic Sound, the *Auṃ*:

The one syllable *Auṃ* is *Brahman*. . . . It can be used for union (*sāyujya*) with *Paramātman*, who exists as the manifold universe.

*Mahānārāyaṇa Upanishad* 33:1; cf. *MUSV* p.206

The *Maitrī Upanishad* also speaks of the *Auṃ* as the means of attaining complete union with *Brahman*. In the creation below *Brahman*, *Brahman* is manifest as the Sound (*Shabda*) of *Auṃ*, but in *Brahman* Itself, where there is no duality or difference, the Sound is silent (*Ashabda*, non-Sound). The writer is using paradox in order to try and jolt the mind into seeking answers beyond the realm of concepts:

Verily, there are two *Brahmans* to be meditated upon –  
*Shabda* and *Ashabda*.  
 Only through *Shabda* is the *Ashabda* revealed.  
 Here, the *Shabda* is *Auṃ*.  
 Moving upward with its help,  
 the ascent can be made into the *Ashabda*.  
 There (the soul says):  
 “This is the way, this is immortality,  
 this is complete union (*sāyujya*) and tranquillity.”

*Maitrī Upanishad* 6:22

See also: **mukti**.

1. Ramjee Singh, *Jaina Perspective*, *JPPR*.
2. Ramjee Singh, *Jaina Perspective*, *JPPR*.
3. *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* 11:2.41, 45.
4. *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* 10:29.15.
5. Cf. *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* 3:25.34, 3:29.13, 11:14.14, *passim*.
6. Cf. *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* 5:20.27; 3:25.36, 40; 1:6.17–18.
7. *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* 1:6.18.
8. *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* 11:2.22.
9. E.g. *Muktikā Upanishad* 1; *Maitrī Upanishad* 4:1, 4; *Mahānārāyaṇa Upanishad* 15:1; *Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad* 1:3.22–23, 5:13.1–4; *Chhāndogya Upanishad* 2:20.2.

**self-abandonment** See **abandonment of self**.

**self-knowledge, self-realization** From a psychological perspective, the realization or fulfilment of one's potential or abilities; awareness of one's personality, talents and human strengths, as well as one's inabilities and weaknesses, *etc.*; spiritually and mystically, realization of the soul's highest potential, which is to experience the nature of the soul as the real self, and to progress from there to experience the nature of God.

The realms of creation have sometimes been divided into the mental realms that lie within the sphere of the greater or universal mind,<sup>1</sup> and the purely spiritual realms that lie beyond the universal mind. Mystic knowledge of the soul – that it is pure spirit – is a high state, attained when the soul gains release from all aspects of the greater mind, on rising above the level of the universal mind. It is not a matter of intellect, intuition, or any other faculty of human understanding. It requires that the soul and mind should learn how to withdraw entirely from the body, pass through the experience of death while still living in this world, 'traverse' the higher realms, and step out into the purely spiritual realms beyond the confines of all aspects of the mind.

From a spiritual viewpoint, self-realization includes an awareness of the real spiritual goal and purpose of being incarnate in human form. It includes an ordering of one's priorities, and the implementation and practice of self-discipline so that this goal is given the first priority, and may ultimately be attained.

Self-knowledge can mean the same as self-realization, if the self is understood to be the soul. More commonly, however, self-knowledge refers to an awareness of the workings of one's own human mind. The first step towards spiritual self-realization is an awareness that the real self is not the body, but something altogether more subtle, an awareness that is increased by spiritual practice and the accompanying elevation of consciousness. Nor is the self the same as attributes such as wealth, social status, physical strength, and so on, with which the mind generally identifies. Gregory of Nyssa points out that a person who identifies with what is constantly changing will himself be in constant flux. He suggests that the best protection for the spiritual treasure within is accurate self-knowledge:

Our greatest protection is self-knowledge, and to avoid the delusion that we are seeing ourselves, when we are in reality looking at something else. This is what happens to those who do not scrutinize themselves. What they see is strength, beauty, reputation, political power, abundant wealth, pomp, self-importance, bodily stature, a certain grace of form or the like, and they think that this is what they are. Such persons make very poor guardians of themselves: because of their absorption in something else, they overlook what is their own and leave it unguarded.

How can a person protect what he does not know? The most secure protection for our treasure is to know ourselves: each one must know himself as he is, and distinguish himself from all that is not he, that he may not unconsciously be protecting something else instead of himself.

Now anyone who has any regard for the life of this world or thinks that worldly honour is worth protecting, does not know how to distinguish himself from what he is not. No passing thing is strictly ours. For how can we have dominion over that which is passing and transitory? Spiritual and immaterial beings are always the same; whereas matter passes, constantly changing in a kind of flux or movement. Hence it must follow that he who separates himself from what is stable will be carried along by that which is in flux. And in abandoning what is stable for that which is passing, he will lose both, for while he gives up the one, he is unable to keep up with the other.

*Gregory of Nyssa, On Canticles 2, PG44 cols.804a ff., GGG pp.159–60*

Walter Hilton, who has much to say on the subject, emphasizes that to gain an understanding of spiritual realities, a soul must first come to understand and know its own essence as a “living and invisible spirit”:

A soul that desires to attain knowledge of spiritual things must first know itself, for it cannot acquire knowledge of a higher kind until it first knows itself. The soul does this when it is so recollected and detached from all earthly preoccupations and from the influence of the senses that it understands itself as it is in its own nature, taking no account of the body.

So if you desire to know and see your soul as it is, do not look for it within your body as though it were hidden in your heart in the same way that the heart is hidden within the body. If you look for it in this way you will never find it. The more you search for it as for a material object, the further you are from it, for your soul is not tangible, but a living and invisible spirit.

*Walter Hilton, Ladder of Perfection 2:30, LPH pp.186–87*

In this sense, self-knowledge means an awareness of one’s naked being, the state of a contemplative who has separated his thoughts from external things and has found peace in the inner darkness of his own being, also described as the cloud of unknowing. This state, however, is only the beginning of the spiritual ascent:

There are many devout souls who by grace enter this darkness and attain self-knowledge, but who do not yet fully understand this process. This ignorance tends to hinder their progress.

*Walter Hilton, Ladder of Perfection 2:27, LPH p.174*

This inner darkness is also entered by contemplation and a focused examination of one's own innermost thoughts and being. At first, like a person who has just entered a dark room, it may seem "dark and obscure", but later will give way to many things, including light:

His condition is like that of a man who has been a long time in the sun, and then comes suddenly into a dark house. At first he is like a blind man and sees nothing, but if he waits a little he will soon be able to see about him, at first large objects, then small, and then everything that is in the house. It is the same in the spiritual world. To one who renounces the love of the world and attains self-knowledge by examination of conscience, everything at first seems dark and obscure. But if he stands firm and prays earnestly, constantly directing his will to the love of Jesus, he will later be able to see many things, both great and small, of which he previously knew nothing. . . . Light shall spring up for you in the darkness. That is, for you who sincerely abandon the light of all worldly love and plunge yourselves mentally into this darkness there will arise the light of the blessed love and spiritual knowledge of God.

*Walter Hilton, Ladder of Perfection 2:27, LPH pp.179–80*

Self-knowledge as an awareness of oneself as a spiritual being goes hand-in-hand with self-knowledge as an insight into the workings of one's own mind. Contemplation leads to self-knowledge, as the contemplative observes the content of his own mind:

Little by little the disciple will learn to watch the thoughts which interrupt his inner prayer, and will achieve a degree of self-knowledge that may reveal to him many details of the inner mechanism of his own psyche. These will not be the imaginary fantasies with which a man usually solaces himself.

*Alexander d'Agapeyeff, Introduction, in OPJA p.12*

Self-examination is thus a part of the process of spiritual evolution:

A man should first consider his failings, try to know himself within, and by this self-knowledge, free himself. If he does not turn into himself, if he neglects to consider his failings, he never gains a true insight, and hence cannot free himself in order to become really pure.

He who attends only to external works, and clings to them, never arrives at proper self-knowledge and in fact frequently fails in them. Such men believe that they are performing a virtue when it may be a vice.

*Book of the Poor in Spirit 2:1.3, BPSG pp.123–24*



Self-knowledge of this kind is sometimes equated with humility, since humility is an essential quality in a person who would come to know himself:

The more a man humbles himself, the more he raises up the praise of God. He who really perseveres in the love of God and his neighbour, and yet in his humility and self-knowledge reckons himself to be unworthier and lower than others, will overcome his enemies, will be confident in the love of the great Judge, and when he passes from the light of this world will be received by the angels into eternal joy.

*Richard Rolle, Fire of Love 28; cf. FLML (1:28), FLRR p.133*

On the other hand, self-examination leads to humility and is an essential companion to spiritual progress, to help keep the ego under control. Even so, as Teresa of Ávila points out, focusing the attention entirely on oneself, rather than upon the Divine, becomes counterproductive:

However high a state the soul may have attained, self-knowledge is incumbent upon it, and this it will never be able to neglect even should it so desire. Humility must always be doing its work like a bee making its honey in the hive: without humility all will be lost. Still, we should remember that the bee is constantly flying about from flower to flower, and in the same way, believe me, the soul must sometimes emerge from self-knowledge and soar aloft in meditation upon the greatness and the majesty of its God. Doing this will help it to realize its own baseness better than thinking of its own nature, and it will be freer from the reptiles which enter the first rooms – that is, the rooms of self-knowledge. For although, as I say, it is through the abundant mercy of God that the soul studies to know itself, yet one can have too much of a good thing, as the saying goes, and believe me, we shall reach much greater heights of virtue by thinking upon the virtue of God than if we stay in our own little plot of ground and tie ourselves down to it completely.

I do not know if I have explained this clearly: self-knowledge is so important that, even if you were raised right up to the heavens, I should like you never to relax your cultivation of it; so long as we are on this earth, nothing matters more to us than humility.

*Teresa of Ávila, Interior Castle 1:2, CWTA2 p.208*

Using the metaphor of bread that is eaten as a staple diet with every meal, she again recommends self-examination, so long as it does not become self-absorption; for spiritual progress consists of gradually forgetting the self in remembrance of the Divine:

This matter of self-knowledge must never be neglected. No soul on this road is such a giant that it does not often need to become a child

at the breast again. (This must never be forgotten: I may repeat it again and again, for it is of great importance.) For there is no state of prayer, however sublime, in which it is not necessary often to go back to the beginning. And self-knowledge with regard to sin is the bread which must be eaten with food of every kind, however dainty it may be, on this road of prayer: without this bread we could not eat our food at all.

But bread must be taken in moderate proportions. When a soul finds itself exhausted and realizes clearly that it has no goodness of its own, when it feels ashamed in the presence of so great a King and sees how little it is paying of all that it owes Him, what need is there for it to waste its time on learning to know itself? It will be wiser to go on to other matters which the Lord sets before it, and we are not doing right if we neglect such things, for His Majesty knows better than we what kind of food is good for us.

*Teresa of Ávila, Life 13, CWTAl p.80*

See also: **ātmabodha**, **God-realization**, **know thyself**.

1. See **universal mind** (6.1).

**shàng** (C) *Lit.* to rise, to go up, to ascend. See **fēi**.

**shānti** (S/H/Pu), **sānt**, **shānt** (Pu) *Lit.* tranquillity, peace, bliss, quietness, calmness, restfulness; peace of mind; hence, absence of passion; the essential characteristic of a mind that has been stabilized through absorption in divine love. For as long as the soul is unable to rise above the realms of the mind, and particularly the realm of the body and its associated *prārabdha karma*, peace will not be continuous, but will be broken by the vacillations of the mind. *Shānti* is one of the sixty names by which non-violence (*ahiṃsā*) is depicted in the Jain *Prashna-vyākaraṇa Sūtra*, some of the others being joy (*rati*), contentment (*trīpti*), and compassion (*dayā*).

Consciously or unconsciously, true peace and happiness is the goal of every living being. In fact, peace and bliss are the natural state of the realized soul or real self:

Peace (*shānti*) arises from enjoyment of the bliss of one's soul (*ātmā*).

*Adhyātma Upanishad 28; cf. TMU p.45*

To realize this self, and attain such sublime peace, all illusion must be destroyed:

After crossing the ocean of delusion and killing the monsters of attraction and aversion, the *yogī* who is united with peace (*shānti*) dwells in the light of his own soul (*ātmā*).

*Shankara, Ātmabodha 50; cf. ABSC pp.92–93*

Hence, the well-known Vedic prayer, the *Peace Chant*, which appears at the beginning and end of most *Upanishads*, and in many other places, implores: “*Aum! Shānti! Shānti! Shānti! (Aum! Peace! Peace! Peace!)*.”

The *gurus* whose writings are preserved in the *Ādi Granth* maintain that this peace and bliss is the blessing of a *satguru* (true master) who teaches the practice of listening to the divine Name (*Nām*):

Without the *satguru*, everyone dies, crying out in pain:  
 night and day, they burn, and find no peace.  
 But meeting the *satguru*, all thirst is quenched.  
 O Nānak, through the *Nām*,  
 one finds peace (*sānt*) and tranquillity (*sukh*).

*Guru Amardās, Ādi Granth 664, AGK*

Sing of the Lord’s feet within your heart.  
 Meditate, meditate in constant remembrance on God,  
 the embodiment of soothing peace (*sānt*)  
 and cooling tranquillity (*sukh*).  
 All your hopes shall be fulfilled,  
 and the pain of millions of deaths and births shall be gone.  
 Immerse yourself in the *sādhū sang* (company of the holy),  
 and you shall obtain the benefits of giving charitable gifts,  
 and all sorts of good deeds.  
 Sorrow and suffering shall be erased, O Nānak,  
 and you shall never again be devoured by death.

*Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 1300, AGK*

See also: **sahaja**, **saṃtosha** (►4).

**shaṭḥ** (A/P) (pl. *shaṭḥiyāt*, *shaṭḥ ḥā*) *Lit.* roving, roaming, going astray; commotion, jubilation, exclamation; an ecstatic utterance, such as the “*Anā al-Ḥaqq* (I am God)!” of Maṣṣūr al-Ḥallāj or the “*Subḥānī* (glory be to me)!” of Abū Yazīd al-Bisṭāmī; the ravings of an ecstatic; an utterance that is often contrary to the exoteric *sharīʿah* (Islamic religious law), and is generally deemed heretical by orthodox Islam, but which may nevertheless be true,<sup>1</sup> and consequently has been much discussed in Sufi literature. The saying attributed to Jesus, “I and my Father are one,”<sup>2</sup> is of a similar nature. From

a mystical viewpoint, sayings of this nature stem from inner realization, and the annihilation of the self in union with God.

Tahānawī points out that it is difficult to make an assessment of the meaning of such statements, since it is not possible to know the inner state of the one who has uttered it:

The reason for not accepting such exclamations is that anyone other than the impeccable prophets risks having fallen into blasphemy by doing so. The reason for not rejecting it is that, where it is emitted by a mystic, such an ecstatic may actually be contemplating a spiritual reality (*ma'nā*), such that if an onlooker whose perception is veiled rejects it in a given instance, he might be rejecting God. Hence, it is safer to say, "Neither accept it nor reject it because of a confusion therein."

*Tahānawī, Kashshāf Iṣṭilāḥāt al-Funūn, KIFT2 p.466, in SSE8 p.73*

Ni'mat Allāh Valī explains briefly how such utterances come about:

The word (*shaṭḥ*) denotes commotion. A mill is called a *shaṭṭāḥ* (agent of commotion) because of the vigorous motion of its grindstone. When the flow of water in a river becomes so great that it overflows the banks, it is said that the water in the river 'was in a state of commotion (*shaṭaḥa*)'. By the same token, mystics call the commotion of inner consciousness of ecstatics' utterance, *shaṭḥ*, when their ecstasy gains power, in the sense that the water of divine knowledge and mysteries overflow or 'burst out of' the vessel of their comprehension in such way that the intellect is incapable of comprehending.

*Shāh Ni'mat Allāh Valī, Rasā'il, RNV4 p.152, in SSE8 p.73*

Abū Naṣr al-Sarrāj goes into the matter in greater detail:

Ecstatic utterance (*shaṭḥ*) signifies an outwardly extraordinary and unexpected utterance by *ṣūfī* masters while overcome by ecstasy and mystical state. It is meaningful to those who are privy to it, while it needs interpretation for others to understand.

Ecstatic utterance (*shaṭḥ*) involves an extraordinary statement describing an ecstasy that has reached its full potential, attaining an intense ferment and powerful possession. The word *shaṭḥ* denotes commotion, where here it refers to the 'commotion of the inner consciousness (*sirr*) of ecstatics'. When their ecstasy gains power, they utter words in the form of a statement that appears extraordinary to the listener. When someone who is blasphemous and irredeemable hears it, he rejects and mocks it. When one who is sound and redeemable

hears it, he does not reject it, deliberating about what is difficult for him to comprehend and asking about it from someone who knows. This is the nature of ecstatic utterance (*shaṭḥ*).

Consider what happens to the water of a river when the vigour of its flow proves too much for the narrowness of its banks to contain: it overflows its banks, where it may be described as bursting out of its course. This is what happens to the ecstatic disciple, when his ecstasy becomes so powerful that he can no longer resist the onrush of the lights of the truths of ecstasy upon his heart, so that it ‘bursts out’ of his heart onto his tongue, being expressed in the form of an extraordinary statement, difficult to comprehend for the listener unless he is privy to and well versed in this sort of thing.

*Abū Naṣr al-Sarrāj, Lumaʿ fī al-Taṣawwuf, KLTA p.375; cf. in SSE8 p.71*

Rūzbihān provides a similar explanation, in terms of mystical experience – *mukāshafat* (revelation, unveiling), *mubāsharat* (good tidings), and much more:

According to an Arabic expression: “*Shaṭaḥa yasṭaḥa, idha taḥarraka* (It came bursting forth, when it was stirred into commotion),” ecstatic utterance (*shaṭḥ*) involves commotion, where, for example, a flour mill has been called a *miṣṭāḥ* (instrument of commotion) because of the vigorous motion that takes place therein. Hence, in *ṣūfī* language, the term, *shaṭḥ* has been adapted to refer to ‘commotion in the *ṣūfī*’s inner consciousness’.

When ecstasy gains power, and the light of mystic experience grows strong in the depths of the *ṣūfī*’s inner consciousness in terms of good tidings (*mubāsharat*), revelation (*mukāshafat*), and the strengthening of the spirit in the lights of inspiration, which appear to his intellect, it fans the fire of yearning for the pre-eternal Beloved, so that he may attain direct vision of the pavilion of splendour and circulate in the realm of magnificence. When he sees the phenomena of the Unseen, the hidden things of the Unseen of the Unseen, and the mysteries of grandeur, drunkenness arises spontaneously in him; the soul quickens; the inner consciousness stirs into ferment; and the tongue breaks forth in speech. The ecstatic emits an utterance stirred by the blazing of his states and the elevation of his spirit in knowledge of stations the outward aspect of which is obscure, this utterance being in the form of a statement the words of which are extraordinary. Since the utterance is incomprehensible to the ordinary, they reject and mock the speaker.

*Rūzbihān, Sharḥ-i Shaṭḥiyāt 10:89, CPS pp.56–57; cf. in SSE8 pp.71–72*

While many seekers would like to enjoy experiences such as this, Hujwīrī observes that imitation of ecstatic utterances is not wise. He is talking of a certain al-Ashqānī:

He was an *imām* in every branch of the fundamental and derivative sciences, and consummate in all respects. He had met a great number of eminent *ṣūfīs*. His doctrine was based on annihilation (*fanā*), and his abstruse manner of expression was peculiarly his own; but I have seen some fools who imitated it and adopted his ecstatic phrases (*shatḥḥ ḥā*). It is not even laudable to imitate an understanding of spiritual realities; mark, then, how wrong it must be to imitate a mere manner of expression!

*Hujwīrī, Kashf al-Maḥjūb XII, KMM p.210; cf. KM p.168*

A number of the sayings attributed to Abū Yazīd al-Bisṭāmī have been classed as *shatḥḥiyāt*. But like many great mystics of the past, Bisṭāmī's sayings and deeds became subject to much embellishment, legend and hearsay, and he remained an active subject of discussion among Sufis. Al-Sarrāj devotes a portion of his book, *Kitāb al-Luma' fī al-Taṣawwuf* ('Book of Light on Sufism') to discussing the meaning of some of these *shatḥḥiyāt*, often quoting the observations of Junayd on the sayings of Bisṭāmī. Al-Sarrāj admits, however, that he had been unable to obtain a "formal written version" of Junayd's discussions. He quotes, for instance, the saying attributed to Abū Yazīd:

Once, He took me up, placed me before Him and said to me, "O Abū Yazīd, my creation would love to seek you."

I said: "Adorn me with Your unity, clothe me with Your subjectivity, and take me up to Your Oneness, until, when Your creation sees me, they say, 'We have seen You,' and You will be *that*, and I will not be there."

*Abū Naṣr al-Sarrāj, Luma' fī al-Taṣawwuf, KLTA p.382, in EIM (124:1) pp.215–16*

Al-Sarrāj then continues by saying that Junayd had observed that Abū Yazīd had clearly not attained complete union with the Divine, else he would not have needed to make this request of *Allāh*. He also argues that there is nothing untoward in Abū Yazīd's claim that *Allāh* had taken him up into His presence, for – he says – all creatures are constantly in the presence of *Allāh*, though they vary widely in their consciousness of it. He then quotes a *ḥadīth* in which even Muḥammad says that when he wished to enter into prayer, "I stood before the almighty King." He likewise explains the seemingly verbal converse with *Allāh* as a metaphorical allusion to "the intimate conversations of the secret of the heart and to the purity of remembrance that occurs with the heart's vision of the almighty King's watchful regard day and night".<sup>3</sup> And he ends this part of his discussion by quoting an anonymous verse which he attributes to a worldly lover, although elsewhere the verse is attributed to al-Ḥallāj:

I am my beloved, my beloved is I.  
If you see me, you see us both,  
two spirits in one flesh,  
clothed by *Allāh* in a single body.

*Unattributed, in Lumaʿ fī al-Taṣawwuf, KLTA p.384, in EIM (124:6) p.218*

Al-Sarrāj observes:

Now if a creature can experience a fellow creature in this way, what would you make of something beyond that? A report has reached me of a certain sage who said: “Two lovers have not attained the reality of love until one says to the other, “I”. It would prolong our discussion for me to give an in-depth explanation of that issue. What I have already recalled is enough. In *Allāh* alone is success.

*Al-Sarrāj, Lumaʿ fī al-Taṣawwuf, KLTA p.384; cf. in EIM (124:7) p.219*

Al-Sarrāj then continues with the discussion of another *shaḥḥ* attributed to Abū Yazīd:

“As soon as I arrived at His Oneness, I became a bird whose body was of unity and whose wings were of everlastingness. So I continued to fly through the ether of how-ness (*kayfīyah*) for ten years until I came to the air of something like it, but one thousand thousand times more. I did not cease flying until I came to the field of pre-eternity and saw there the tree of unity.”

Then he described its roots, trunk, boughs, branches, and fruits. Then he said, “Then I looked and knew that it was all a deception.”

*Abū Naṣr al-Sarrāj, Lumaʿ fī al-Taṣawwuf, KLTA p.384; cf. in EIM (125:1) p.219*

As al-Sarrāj points out, Abū Yazīd is clearly talking in metaphors in his attempts to describe the indescribable. He sees it as a “deception” because it is not the ultimate experience of union itself. Nor is he really saying that he became a bird, and that the Divine is a tree with branches, and so on:

How can it be that a man becomes a bird and flies? The meaning he was alluding to is the high aspiration and the flight of the heart, a usage that can be found in the language of the Arabs. One says, “I almost flew out of joy,” and “My heart flew,” and “My mind was about to fly away.” Yaḥyā ibn Muʾadh (God’s compassion upon him) said, “The renunciate walks while the mystic (*ʿarīf*) flies.”

*Abū Naṣr al-Sarrāj, Lumaʿ fī al-Taṣawwuf, KLTA p.385; cf. in EIM (125:4) p.220*

In all of this discussion, al-Sarrāj is meeting the criticism of the opponents of Sufism, pointing out that Abū Yazīd was neither mad nor a heretic. He

was a mystic whose *shaṭḥiyāt* had been misunderstood. After discussion of further sayings of Abū Yazīd, he concludes with a discussion of the famous, “*Subḥānī* (glory be to me)!”<sup>4</sup>

See also: **anā al-Ḥaqq, subḥānī.**

1. Bākhazrī, *Awrād al-Aḥbāb wa Fuṣūṣ al-Ādāb*, AAF2 p.59, in SSE8 pp.73–74.
2. *John* 10:30, *KJV*.
3. Abū Naṣr al-Sarrāj, *Lumaʿ fī al-Taṣawwuf*, *KLTA* pp.381–84, in *EIM* (124:1–7) pp.216–19.
4. Abū Naṣr al-Sarrāj, *Lumaʿ fī al-Taṣawwuf*, *KLTA* pp.390–95, in *EIM* (127:1–7) pp.226–32.

**Shekhinah** (He) *Lit.* dwelling place; the power of the divine as manifested or immanent in creation; often translated as God’s ‘indwelling presence’, implying His immanence as opposed to His transcendence; the radiance by which the immanent presence of God is visibly manifested, either among His people or in the Temple; from the verb *shakhan* (to dwell).

In Islam, the related Arabic word *sakīnah* appears six times in the *Qurʾān*,<sup>1</sup> where it signifies peace, tranquillity, and more specifically the peace of the divine presence:

He it is who sent down tranquillity (*sakīnah*)  
into the hearts of the believers,  
that they might add fresh faith to their faith.

*Qurʾān* 48:4; cf. *AYA*

*Allāh* sent down His tranquillity (*sakīnah*)  
to his Messenger and to the believers.

*Qurʾān* 48:26, *AYA*

In Muslim lore, however, the *sakīnah* is also said to have manifested as a visible, protective presence, in much the same manner as in Jewish stories. According to a story concerning the Sufi mystic and devotee Rābiʿah Baṣrī, during a time of famine, Rābiʿah was seized by an evil-minded man, who sold her as a slave to a master who made her work hard. During the day, she would attend to her work, often fasting continually, but at night she would pass her time in devotion to God:

One night her master awoke from sleep and looked down through a window of the house and saw Rābiʿah with her head bowed in worship. She was praying, “O my Lord, You know that the desire of my heart



is to live in Your will, and that the light of my eye is in the service of Your court. If the matter was in my hands, I would not cease for one hour from Your service, but You have made me subject to a human being.” While she was praying in this manner, her master saw a lamp above her head, suspended without a chain, the light whereof filled the whole house. On seeing this strange sight, Rābi‘ah’s master was afraid, and rose up and returned to his bedroom, and sat pondering until daybreak. When the day dawned, he called Rābi‘ah, spoke kindly to her, and set her free.

‘Aṭṭār, *Tadhkirat al-Awliyā’ I*, TAN1 p.61; cf. MSM p.42, in RM p.7

This enveloping radiance or *sakīnah* of Muslim saints corresponds to the halo of Christian saints, and is frequently mentioned in Sufi biographies.<sup>2</sup>

The term *Shekhinah* has been used in Jewish literature since the first or second centuries CE. Although absent from the Bible, words with the same root – meaning dwelling, sanctuary or abode – do occur in the early Hebrew scriptures, but are not related to the later usage as a synonym for God’s immanent power. The notion of the *Shekhinah* resolved the contradiction between the transcendent God of the Bible, who was often regarded as remote and unapproachable, and His manifest and approachable aspect, through which the biblical prophets were able to experience Him. In rabbinic times, from about the first or second century CE, the *Shekhinah* was regarded as synonymous with God, sometimes characterized as a manifestation or projection of the divine power.

The term first appears in the non-legal rabbinic literature (*Aggadah*) in the period of the *tanna’im* (the early rabbinic authorities), sometime in the first two centuries CE, where it refers to the divine presence existing in the world and sustaining it. It represents an aspect of the Divine to which human beings can relate personally:

Whoever is humble will ultimately cause the *Shekhinah* to dwell with men on earth. But whoever is haughty will bring about the defilement of the earth and the departure of the *Shekhinah*.

*Mekhilta de Rabbi Ishmael, Massekhta de-ba-Ḥodesh 6, MHMI p.238, in MQ p.91*

There are numerous examples of its use in the *Talmud*. It is reported that Rabbi Ḥananiah ben Teradion (c.135 CE) said: “If two sit together and the words between them are of the *Torah*, then the *Shekhinah* is in their midst;”<sup>3</sup> and Rabbi Halafta ben Dosa said: “If ten men sit together and occupy themselves with the *Torah*, the *Shekhinah* rests among them.”<sup>4</sup> Elsewhere the *Talmud* asserts: “The *Shekhinah* dwells over the head end of the sick man’s bed.”<sup>5</sup>

The *Shekhinah* serves as a bridge between the transcendent, concealed God and individual human beings. Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz, a contemporary teacher

of Jewish spirituality, defines the *Shekhinah* as “the godly ‘energy’ that fills the universe, giving life and existence to each created being in accordance with its particular characteristics.”<sup>6</sup> This spiritual energy is clothed within the physicality of the world, where it is concealed; but it is also revealed by the fact that it brings the world into existence. To Steinsaltz, the *Shekhinah* signifies the “Speech” or Word of God, which is the means by which God reveals Himself to human beings:

God is independent of us, but we depend on Him; He sees us, but we cannot see Him. From His standpoint, there is no barrier between us; from our standpoint, because we are creations of God’s Speech, we can, at best and with great difficulty, gain a scant appreciation of that Speech. Any comprehension that we do achieve is called the revelation of the *Shekhinah*. When a person gains an awareness of the divine presence in the world, when he feels how God’s glory fills all reality, he is cognizant of the divine Speech speaking within the world, enlivening it, and maintaining its existence.

*Adin Steinsaltz, Learning from the Tanya, LTAS p.167*

In the rabbinic period, the term *Shekhinah* was often used in the same way as the biblical term *kavod* (glory), which the mystics understood as a specific reference to the visual manifestation of God’s divine power in creation. Later, the twelfth-century Jewish mystics of Germany, the *Hasidei Ashkenaz*, also called the *Shekhinah* ‘God’s *kavod*’ since it comes from Him. In some instances, the *Shekhinah* (like the *kavod*) was understood as a divine power with two aspects – an ‘inner’ aspect that does not manifest and an ‘outer’ aspect that does.

Rabbi Eleazar of Worms (C12th), son of Rabbi Judah the *Hasid*, was one of those who drew a parallel between the *Shekhinah* and the biblical glory (*kavod*). According to Rabbi Eleazar, it is this aspect of God, manifested as fire, which Moses and the other prophets saw, although Moses saw it more clearly than the other prophets. As the Creator is formless, it is His glory or *Shekhinah* that He permits His devotees to see:

The Creator has no body, physical stature, image, or form at all. . . . The glory (*kavod*) is an appearance of the resplendent light, which is called *Shekhinah*, and the will of the Creator shows and images that very light to the prophets according to the hour – to this one as that (form) and to the other as that. . . . From the resplendent light, He created His glory (*kavod*), . . . (but) the appearance of the vision is in the heart of the one who sees. . . . The Creator is one and makes the glory (*kavod*) appear according to His will. . . . The appearance of His splendour, which is His glory (*kavod*), is like a consuming fire, and

they called it *Shekhinah*. . . . According to the will of the Creator is the appearance of His glory (*kavod*).

Moses saw the splendour of the glory (*kavod*), the great resplendence, more than all the prophets. Within the vision are images (*dimyonot*), (as it is written in *Hosea*) “and through the prophets I (God) was imagined.”<sup>7</sup> . . . The appearance of the images is according to the desire of His decrees. Sometimes in the image of an *anthrōpos* (man) and sometimes in another image, in accordance with His will, He shows (the prophet) His glory (*kavod*) in the place that He wills.

*Eleazar ben Judah of Worms, Sha'arei ha-Sod ha-Yihud ve-ha-Emunah I, in SSYE pp.147–48, in TSSW p.214*

Elliot Wolfson, who translated this text, observes that Rabbi Eleazar distinguishes between two levels of the divine glory – upper and lower – and that the prophets, even Moses, only experienced the lower glory. The *Shekhinah* may have given them the inspiration, but they were not able to see it. What they saw was the visible glory emanating from the *Shekhinah*. That said, both glories are aspects of the *Shekhinah*, and equally beyond description:

The upper glory, called *Shekhinah* or the great splendour (*hod ha-gadol*) is an invisible formless light, whereas the lower glory is that which is seen by the various prophets. With respect to the latter, one needs to make a further distinction: Moses had a clear vision of that lower glory through the speculum (mirror) that shines,<sup>8</sup> and all other prophets beheld the glory through a speculum that does not shine, that is, through images that distort reality.

*Elliot Wolfson, Through a Speculum That Shines, TSSW p.214*

From the Middle Ages, the *Shekhinah* was generally personified as a feminine entity, an aspect of the divine Godhead that became separated at the time of creation. The *Shekhinah* became the archetype of the divine female, and from that time onward, epithets such as mother, sister, daughter, beloved, bride and queen were often used for her.<sup>9</sup>

The first book to feminize the *Shekhinah* was the anonymous text known as the *Sefer ha-Bahir* (‘Book of Brilliance’), which appeared at the beginning of the thirteenth century. In this text, the *Shekhinah* is likened to God’s daughter who lives in the world. She is a vessel in whom the divine power of all the *sefirot* (emanations of divine qualities) can be experienced. To know God, therefore, it is necessary to know the *Shekhinah*. According to a story related in the *Sefer ha-Bahir*:

A certain king dwelt within the inner chamber of his palace. There were thirty-two chambers in all, and each chamber had its own path.

Now, is it proper for everyone to come to the king's chamber by simply following all the paths? Of course not. And is it proper for the king to openly reveal his pearls, brocades and hidden, precious treasures? Of course not. So what did the king do? He appointed his daughter and set in her and in her garments, all the different pathways. Anyone who wishes to enter the palace should look to her.

*Sefer ha-Bahir* 63, in *MQ* p.93

In this parable, the “thirty-two chambers” represent the ten *sefirot* plus the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet, which Jewish mystics viewed as the ‘building blocks’ of the creation and as the path of the soul that would return to God. The story means that in order to find God – to enter the king's chamber – the seeker must first find favour with the *Shekhinah* (the king's daughter). She must be worshipped. All paths to God converge in her, and the way to worship God is through the *Shekhinah*.

In the thirteenth-century *Zohar*, the primary work of the Kabbalah, the ten *sefirot* are depicted in an image known as the Tree of Life, in which the *Shekhinah* generally corresponds to the *sefirah* of *Malkut* (Kingship, royal dominion), the lowest of the *sefirot*. The *Shekhinah* is the conduit that channels the divine energy, which first emanated from the second *sefirah* of *Hokhmah* (Wisdom), into the lower, physical realm. According to this model, *Keter* (Crown, the first *sefirah*) represents the concealed will of God (the will-less will, meaning the divine will that had not yet manifested as will). *Hokhmah*, the second *sefirah*, is the point where the divine will begins to express itself. *Hokhmah* projects the divine power or energy to the third *sefirah*, *Binah* (Understanding), and so on, with the divine energy finally descending to the level of *Malkut*. The *Shekhinah* as *Malkut* thus represents the divine will manifested – and even trapped – in the material creation. She is also the portal that facilitates the reciprocal exchange of the divine energy between the material realm and the spiritual realms of emanation and causation. Through this reciprocal relationship, she allows the divine energy to descend into the world and to return to its Source.

In the complex and highly symbolic teachings of the sixteenth-century Rabbi Isaac Luria of Safed in northern Israel, the notion of the return of the *Shekhinah* to her source in God is interwoven with that of the *tikkun* (restoration) of the soul to its supreme, divine Source. According to Luria's symbolism, the unification or restoration of the *sefirot* is sometimes described in terms of an exchange of energy between the bride *Shekhinah* (the negative or receptive pole) and her husband, the *sefirah* of *Tiferet* (Beauty, the positive or active pole), which is identified with the (masculine) name of God – *Yahweh*. The duty of the devotee is to help sustain this unification of the positive and negative poles of spiritual energy through devotional and spiritual practices. Through *devekut* (cleaving to God), and by concentration

on the unification of *Shekhinah* and *Tiferet*, the individual can experience the union of his own soul with the *Shekhinah*. The soul can thus experience the influx of the divine light and energy streaming from the highest *sefirot*. The *Shekhinah* is the channel through which the divine influence enters the soul. In fact, it is believed that God is not accessible except through the *Shekhinah*. According to the *Zohar*, the biblical *Song of Songs* is a song of love between the *Shekhinah* and *Tiferet-Yahweh*.<sup>10</sup>

On an external level, the *Shekhinah* is identified by Jews with the community of Israel. Jewish kabbalists and mystics view their exile from the land of Israel and the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple as an allegory of the exile of the *Shekhinah* from the divine realm of the *sefirot*. They try to bring about the *Shekhinah*'s return – and thus their own return, through their spiritual duties – by performing certain ritual and devotional acts, which are intended to have an impact in the divine realms, as well as on the individual soul. From Luria's time, kabbalists called this process *tikkun*.

The *Shekhinah* was not the only feminine personification of the divine energy. As far back as the talmudic period (C1st–6th CE), the Sabbath was also referred to as the bride and queen.<sup>11</sup> During the Middle Ages, the Sabbath day became identified with the *Shekhinah* and the *Shekhinah* as the bride-queen. The *Zohar*, for instance, urges that the celebration of the weekly Sabbath day should centre on the worship of the Sabbath as bride and queen.

Exemplifying the association of the *Shekhinah* with the Sabbath are a number of hymns written by the Safed kabbalists to hasten the return of the *Shekhinah* to *Tiferet*. These kabbalists transformed the Sabbath ritual into a cosmic wedding ceremony between the feminine *Shekhinah* and the masculine *sefirah* of *Tiferet-Yahweh*. As part of the ritual, they would sing the hymn *Lekha Dodi* ('Come, my Beloved'), written at Edirne in western Turkey by the sixteenth-century Rabbi Shlomo Halevi Alkabez. Rabbi Shlomo was a kabbalist who later settled at Safed and was the spiritual master of the great kabbalist Rabbi Moses Cordovero. The language of the hymn is drawn from the *Psalms*, the *Songs of Songs* and *Isaiah*, and is still traditionally recited in devout Jewish households around the world on Friday evenings, at the start of the Sabbath. Few, however, are aware of its underlying mystical symbolism, and it is understood more literally as a hymn to welcome the peace of the Sabbath. Kabbalists and other Jewish mystics, on the other hand, have always been aware of its mystical meaning as symbolizing the relationship among the *sefirot* in the spiritual realm of emanation (*olam ha-aẓilut*). Kabbalists believe that the loving recitation of this hymn plays a role in hastening the return of the *Shekhinah* to divine favour, to union with *Tiferet*. In the hymn, the words "keep (*shamor*) and remember (*zakhor*)" refer to two passages in *Deuteronomy*<sup>12</sup> and *Exodus*<sup>13</sup> in which the Israelites are commanded to "keep" and "remember" the Sabbath. The first two stanzas of the hymn are:

Come, my beloved, to greet the bride:  
 let us receive the face (light) of the Sabbath.<sup>14</sup>  
 Keep (*shamor*) and remember (*zakhor*) in one act of speech:  
 the unique God caused us to hear it.  
 God is one and His name is one:  
 for the name, for splendour, for praise.

Let us greet the coming of the Sabbath  
 for she is the source of all blessing;  
 From the beginning, from eternity, she was designed.  
 His last act (of creation) was first in His divine thought.

*Rabbi Shlomo Halevi Alkabez, Lekha Dodi*

Rabbi Isaac Luria, in his time the leading kabbalist of Safed, also wrote a hymn to the Sabbath bride as the *Shekhinah* that incorporates the complex kabbalistic symbolism of the *sefirot*:

I sing in hymns to enter the gates  
 of the field of holy apples.  
 A new table we prepare for her,  
 a lovely candelabrum sheds its light upon us.  
 Between right and left, the bride approaches,  
 in holy jewels and festive garments.

*Isaac Luria, Hymn for the Sabbath, in SSRF p.78*

The “field of holy apples” symbolizes the *Shekhinah* herself; it also symbolizes the Garden of Eden. In this hymn, *Shekhinah* is envisioned not as the *sefirah* of *Malkut*, but as the third *sefirah* of *Binah* (Understanding), the womb or repository of creation, which receives the flow of divine energy or power from the second *sefirah* of *Hokhmah* (Wisdom). The table represents the Sabbath table, which symbolizes the Temple, where God’s presence alights, shedding its supernal light on all who assemble. The various items placed on the table represent the holy objects used in the Temple. Finally, the *Shekhinah*, God’s bride, approaches, adorned by spiritual light and joy (“holy jewels and festive garments”).

Some kabbalists personified the *sefirot* to such an extent that they regarded them almost as separate deities or manifestations of God, a development that raised concerns among the more traditional kabbalists and rabbis, since it implied that God was not one, but many. They therefore forbade the worship of individual *sefirot* – even of the *Shekhinah* as the manifestation of *Malkut* or *Binah* – and insisted that all the *sefirot* be worshipped as one; otherwise the practitioners could fall into the heresy of polytheism. From this perspective, the worship of the *Shekhinah* as an individual *sefirah*, separate from the unity of God, was regarded as sinful. Metaphorically, it was termed ‘cutting the

shoots' (of the *sefirot*), which are 'planted' in the world of emanation (*azilut*). It was through the sin of 'cutting the shoots' – worship of the *Shekhinah* as separate from the entire array of the *sefirot* – that the *Shekhinah* was exiled in the realm of matter. She thus became enslaved by the forces of evil that see God as His differentiated qualities, not as the one Unity. In a sense, the *Shekhinah* represents the spark of the Divine that is covered by layers of matter, and as a result of exile in the material realm cannot find her way back to union with *Tiferet*. Once separated from the forces of love and mercy, she became an agent of evil, often called *sitra aħra* (other side).

The *Shekhinah* is not only the divine presence within individual human beings and in the entire creation, but also an expression of negativity. One side of the *Shekhinah* is positive in that she represents the positive divine virtues revealed to human beings and attainable by those who perform the prescribed spiritual practices. The other side represents the dualistic condition of life in the material realms, and is thus negative. But there is hope! The two aspects can be reunited when the *Shekhinah* is raised, through devotion, to reunion with the *sefirah* of *Tiferet*, who represents *Yahweh*, the transcendent God.

Perhaps the most important metaphor of the exile of the *Shekhinah* in the creation is Adam's fall from grace. Just as Adam's sin of disobedience caused his exile from the Garden of Eden, so it caused the *Shekhinah* to be exiled from the spiritual realms. According to Luria's teachings, the *Shekhinah* suffered a fate similar to that of the *niẓozot*, the sparks of light that in the process of creation became separated from their source in the primal light of God and became imprisoned in matter.

Colin Low, an artist and student of Jewish mysticism, summarizes the complex symbolism offered by the traditional *midrash* (biblical commentary):

According to aggadic tradition (narrative tradition of the *Midrash*), *Shekhinah* was originally fully manifest in the world, but the disobedience of Adam and Eve ruptured the flow of divine energy and the *Shekhinah* withdrew. The (virtue of the) biblical patriarchs caused a partial descent of the *Shekhinah* (into the world) – but it was not until the time of Moses and the covenant between God and the Jewish people that the *Shekhinah* had a home in this world, resting between the two cherubim of the ark of the covenant (the place where it was believed God would alight when He wanted to make His presence known). The *Shekhinah* accompanied the Jewish people on their journeys, and found a permanent home with the building of the First (Solomonic) Temple. From the kabbalistic period onward the *Shekhinah* is depicted as being in exile with the Jewish people. Sometimes, she is identified with (the matriarch) Rachel weeping for her children<sup>15</sup>, and with the black-clad figure of Mother Zion.

Colin Low, "Shekhinah," in DBSL



Following the kabbalistic period with its complex and often obscure symbolism, a new and somewhat simpler form of Jewish mysticism, known as Hasidism, arose in the mid–nineteenth century. In Hasidism, it was no longer the elite kabbalist who had the duty to elevate the *Shekhinah* to her source in God and return her from exile. Any *hasid* (devotee) who followed the spiritual path, disciplining himself through *kavanah* (concentration) and *yihud* (merging, unification exercises), was considered capable of liberating the *Shekhinah* from exile, thus restoring the sparks of light to their source. As the sparks had fallen into the realm of matter and were trapped in the *kelipot* (shards of matter), so these sparks of pure spiritual light are present in every aspect of life. The *hasidim* took upon themselves the important task of raising the ‘corporeal’ – the material, physical realm that is encumbered by sin – to the spiritual. All their efforts were understood to possess the potential to extract the spiritual sparks of life from their adhesion to the material and raise them to their divine Source. It was believed by most of the early *hasidim* that any person could become a *zaddik* (a master, a fully realized soul) by living a spiritual life and taking part in the raising of the *Shekhinah*. As Rabbi Elimelekh of Lyzhansk (1717–1786) writes:

The *zaddik* should draw God into this world, in order that He will dwell among us and will sustain us, and then he (the *zaddik*) should raise up the *Shekhinah*.

*Elimelekh of Lyzhansk, No'am Elimelekh, NEEL p.8, in MOHE p.126*

In a sense, the notion of the *Shekhinah* being separated from God (*Yahweh*) is a metaphor for the level of duality in which the masculine and feminine energies of creation have become separated and in opposition to each other. Duality is the level where mercy and justice become opposites. When the *Shekhinah* reunites with God, then the Unity – God’s oneness, beyond any duality – is restored.

See also: **presence of God, sakinah.**

1. *Qur'ān* 2:248, 9:26, 9:40, 48:4, 18, 26.
2. See Margaret Smith, *Rābī'a the Mystic*, *RM* p.7.
3. *Babylonian Talmud, Mishnah Avot* 3:2, *JCL*.
4. *Babylonian Talmud, Mishnah Avot* 3:6, *JCL*.
5. *Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Shabbat* 12b; cf. *JCL*.
6. Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz, *Learning from the Tanya*, *LTAS* p.324.
7. *Hosea* 12:11.
8. *Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Baba Yevamot* 49b, in *TSSW* p.305.
9. See “*Shekhinah*,” *SDBS*.
10. *Zohar* 2:135a–b.
11. *Babylonian Talmud, Tractates Shabbat* 119a, *Baba Kama* 32a–b.



12. *Deuteronomy* 5:12.
13. *Exodus* 20:8.
14. Cf. *Song of Songs* 7:11–12.
15. *Jeremiah* 31:15.

**shēng** (C) *Lit.* to rise, to go up, to ascend. See **fēi**.

**shèngtāi** (C) *Lit.* spiritual (*shèng*) embryo (*tāi*); sacred or holy embryo; in the Daoist *nèidān* (inner alchemy) tradition, the original, inherent and potential spiritual awareness within every human being; the true self. Some variations exist between Daoist schools regarding their descriptions of *shèngtāi* and the practices by which it can be developed. Mostly, the term is understood metaphorically, although it is sometimes taken literally as the formation of an embryo-shaped spiritual body.

*Shèngtāi* is more or less synonymous with *xiāntāi* or *tāixiān* (immortal embryo). Where a distinction is made, *shèngtāi* is used more in the context of the growth and development of innate spiritual awareness, while *xiāntāi* refers to final realization of this awareness. The *shèngtāi* is also known by a variety of other names, including: *yīlíng* (unified spirit, unified awareness), *yángshén* (light spirit), *shēnwài shēn* (body beyond the body), *yīng'ér* (infant), *jīnhuá* (golden flower), and so on. Sometimes, Daoists identify the *shèngtāi* and *xiāntāi* with the *gǔshén* (valley spirit), the *jīndān* (gold elixir), the *tàijí* (Great Ultimate) of the Confucians, and the complete awareness (*yuánjué*) of the Buddhists.<sup>1</sup> However, the highest spiritual consciousness is only one. Seen in that context, all terms that can mean the supreme One may be described as synonymous. As the eighteenth-century master Liú Yīmíng says: “The one Reality in the centre is the spiritual embryo (*shèngtāi*).”<sup>2</sup>

According to the *nèidān* tradition, practitioners develop the *shèngtāi* through refinement and transformation of the three life-essential body energies: *jīng* (vital essence), *qì* (subtle life energy), and *shén* (spirit, spiritual energy). These three energies, purified and transmuted, merge and become the one transcendent immortal or spiritual embryo. This development is achieved by the purification processes of various meditation and breathing exercises. Among these is a technique known as ‘embryonic breathing (*tāixī*)’, a breathing exercise intended to nourish and develop the spiritual embryo. *Nèidān* practitioners refer to progress towards and attainment of their spiritual goal as the conception, development, formation, production, generation, manifestation, solidification, or congealing (*níngjié*) of the immortal or spiritual embryo.

The techniques involve the awakening of subtle bodily energies that, when focused, ascend from the lower, abdominal elixir field (*dāntián*) beneath the navel, through the middle *dāntián* in the heart area, to the upper *dāntián* in the

brain, finally emerging from the top of the head. From here the transformed practitioner ascends and merges into the one Energy (*yīqì*) of the *Dào*, and is able to travel at will in the spiritual realm, living forever as an immortal (*xiān, chéngxiān, shénxiān, xiānrén*).

*Nèidān* texts commonly speak of a notional ten (lunar) months of gestation for development of the immortal embryo, sometimes adding that women have an advantage over men:

The notion of the immortal embryo and its gestation through ten symbolic months is constantly reiterated in inner alchemical literature, and texts on women's practices make it clear that their maternal function constitutes a great advantage over men. While men have to develop a womb inside themselves and learn how to nurture an embryo in it, guarding and cherishing it like a valuable pearl, women already have this faculty naturally and thus have a much easier time learning the practice.... As the internal movement of energies corresponds to the gestative activities already engendered in women, their spiritual progress in inner alchemy is accordingly faster than that of the men.

Catherine Despeux, "Women in Daoism," in *DHK* p.402

Master Liú Yīmíng (1734–1821) explains that the "ten months" are not to be taken literally:

It does not mean an exact period of ten months. It is simply a metaphor for the progression from restoration of the elixir (*huándān*), to perfection of the elixir (*dānshú*), to full maturity of the spiritual embryo (*shèngtāi*). Students should carefully investigate the truth, and not miss the meaning by taking the words literally.

Liú Yīmíng, *Jīndān sībǎi zì jiě*, ZW266, DS12

In his 'twenty-four secrets of alchemy', master Liú Yīmíng describes something of the meditation practice performed in order to "conceive the spiritual embryo (*shèngtāi*)" – to start the process whereby the spiritual embryo grows to maturity:

Conceive the spiritual embryo (*shèngtāi*)  
 by gathering in the multitudinous rays of attention (*shén*),  
 by merging the five elements (*wǔxíng*) into an undifferentiated whole.  
 Then the five energies (*wǔqì*) will return to their origin,  
 united in their spiritual base (*língtái*).

The inherent seed (*xiāntiān zhōngzǐ*) is already firmly planted.  
 As if out of one's mind, as if intoxicated (*zuì*),  
 as if in deep sleep (*hūnshuì*),

in undifferentiated abstruseness (*huǎnghū*)  
and indiscernible profundity (*yǎomíng*),  
the spiritual embryo (*shèngtāi*) will be conceived. . . .

Nurture the embryo (*tāi*) –  
like a hen incubating her eggs,  
like an oyster enfolding a pearl.  
Be devoted,  
like a hen incubating her eggs.  
Stay true,  
like an oyster enfolding a pearl.  
Remain still and vigilant, moment by moment,  
at the spiritual opening (*língqiào*) to the Void (*xū*).

*Liú Yīmíng, Dānfǔ èrshísi jué 14, 16, in Jīndān sìbǎi zì jiě, ZW266, DS12*

Elsewhere, Liú Yīmíng repeats that it is all a question of remaining focused at this “spiritual opening (*língqiào*)” or inner centre – where the material and the spiritual realms meet. According to Daoist philosophy, spiritual realization is a matter of unifying the opposites of *yīn* and *yáng*:

The nurturing of the spiritual embryo (*shèngtāi*) is all a matter of single-mindedly preventing the attention from scattering, steadfastly holding to the centre, and balancing *yīn* and *yáng*. . . . Be present at this centre, then *yīn* and *yáng* will unite, the five elements (*wǔxíng*) will be gathered together, and the spiritual embryo (*shèngtāi*) will mature. Lose this centre, then *yīn* and *yáng* will divide, the five elements (*wǔxíng*) will separate from each other, and the spiritual embryo (*shèngtāi*) will be harmed. So remaining vigilant at the centre is the profound secret of nurturing the spiritual embryo (*shèngtāi*).

*Liú Yīmíng, Xiàngyán pòyí, ZW247, DS14*

Following the traditional Daoist belief, Liú Yīmíng also says that at the time of taking birth, awareness of the spiritual embryo (*shèngtāi*) is “complete and whole”, but is lost with the passage of time. Nevertheless, when a person is born, his level of spiritual evolution depends upon his spiritual progress in previous lives:<sup>3</sup>

At the beginning of human birth, *yīn* and *yáng* are in harmony (*hé*), and the spiritual embryo (*shèngtāi*) is complete and whole. After birth, *yīn* and *yáng* separate, and the spiritual embryo (*shèngtāi*) is harmed.

Human beings of advanced (spiritual) character (*shàngdé*) have a deep and substantial foundation. They meet a perfect teacher (*zhìrén*, perfect man) early in life. Before their *yīn* and *yáng* become separated,

they practise the *Dào* of non-action (*wúwéi*, unforced, selfless, and desireless action), cross over directly to the other shore, and immediately reach the status of the saints (*shèngwèi*).

Next are human beings of intermediate or lesser (character). Although the inherent Energy (*xiāntiān qì*) is fully intact, it is directed outwardly. Their true *yīn* and true *yáng* have become separated and do not interact. Their potential for spiritual life (*shēngjī*) has been squandered and has faded away to almost nothing. If they do not first practise the *dào* (way) of action (*yǒuwéi*) in order to unite *yīn* and *yáng*, how can the spiritual embryo (*shèngtāi*) be restored?

The way of harmoniously uniting (*tiáohé*) *yīn* and *yáng* is to return them to the one Energy (*yīqì*). But the true *yáng* (*i.e.* spirit) has wandered outside, and lives away from home. It has become lost and is unable to return. So you must work hard to find it – painstakingly, carefully, and slowly. Do not fear the difficulties of the long road ahead. When the time comes for you to see it, it will come to you instantly just by your calling it. Then it will lead the way home, to unite with the true *yīn*.

*Liú Yǐmíng, Wùdào lù, ZW268, DS18*

*Yīn* and *yáng* are commonly symbolized as mercury and lead, tiger and dragon, water and fire, and so on, which assists understanding of texts that use this metaphorical language.

The *shèngtāi* is also called the *jīnhuá* (golden flower), which starts as a tiny bud and slowly blossoms as the practitioner develops increasing spiritual realization. Similarly, the *shèngtāi* is depicted as a “minute pearl” that develops within. The practitioner refines his inner *qì* to aid the formation and growth of the “minute pearl”, thereby transforming him into an “immortal”:

When *yīn* is stripped off  
and *yáng* is sufficiently pure,  
a minute pearl will enter the belly (*fù*, *i.e.* your innermost being),  
and you will become a family member  
of the true immortals (*zhēnxiān*).

*Lǐ Dàochún, Zhōnghé jí, DZ249, JY226*

This process involves the awakening of subtle bodily energies that ascend from the lower, abdominal elixir field (*dāntián*) beneath the navel, through the middle *dāntián*, to the upper *dāntián* in the brain, finally emerging from the top of the head. From here, the *shèngtāi* ascends and merges into the one Energy of the *Dào*.

See also: **nèidān** (8.5).

1. E.g. Lǐ Dàochún, *Zhōnghé jí*, DZ249, JY226; Liú Yīmíng, *Xiàngyán pòyí*, ZW247, DS14; Wùdào lù, ZW268, DS18.
2. Liú Yīmíng, *Bǎizì bēi zhù*, ZW257, DS3, TCC3 p.244.
3. For references to reincarnation in the writings of Liú Yīmíng, see e.g. *Xiàngyán pòyí*, ZW247, DS14 and *Yīnfú jīng zhù*, ZW255, DS1 (see e.g. **yuánshén**).

**shǐjué** (C), **shikaku** (J) *Lit.* actualizing (*shǐ*) enlightenment (*jué*, *kaku*); acquiring or manifesting enlightenment; realizing the original or inherent enlightenment (C. *běnjué*, J. *hongaku*) that is the true or *buddha*-nature of all sentient beings; the meditation, right living and associated practices that lead to realization of inherent enlightenment; the relinquishing of impurities and illusions in order to attain enlightenment. See **běnjué**.

**shòu** (C) *Lit.* long life, old age (*shòu*). See **chángshēng**.

**shǒumǔ** (C) *Lit.* to guard (*shǒu*) the Mother (*mǔ*); to protect, preserve, maintain, or keep watch over the Mother (the *Dào*); to embrace or hold onto the Mother; to be present with the Mother, to be present with the *Dào*.

The use of ‘mother’ in connection with the *Dào* arises from the *Dàodé jīng*. The “Mother” is that from which “all things (*tiānxià*, ‘land under heaven’)” arise. She was present even before the creation came into being:

Before heaven and earth existed,  
 there was something abstruse and indistinct (*húnhún*):  
 Silent, isolated, standing alone, unchanging,  
 eternally revolving without fail,  
 worthy to be the Mother (*mǔ*) of all things (*tiānxià*).  
 I do not know its name,  
 but I call it *Dào*.

*Dàodé jīng* 25; cf. WLT p.145

And:

There was a beginning of the universe,  
 which may be called the Mother (*mǔ*) of the universe.

*Dàodé jīng* 52, TTWC p.192

And in the opening chapter:

The *Dào* that can be described  
 is not the eternal (*cháng*) *Dào*.  
 The name that can be named  
 is not the eternal (*cháng*) Name.  
 The Nameless  
 is the beginning of heaven and earth.  
 The Named  
 is the Mother (*mǔ*) of the ten thousand things (*wànwù*).

*Dàodé jīng* 1

The term *shǒumǔ* also appears in the *Dàodé jīng*. Living in this world, human beings come to know about the “ten thousand things” of creation – the “sons” of the Mother. But a person who keeps his attention focused on the “Mother” will remain inwardly untrammelled by the vicissitudes of life, and will be “free from (spiritual) danger”. This is true of any human being, at any time – the *Dàodé jīng* is dated to well over two thousand years ago:

He who has found the Mother (*mǔ*) –  
 and thereby understands her sons  
 and, having understood the sons,  
 still holds onto his mother (*shǒumǔ*) –  
 He will be free from (spiritual) danger throughout his life.

*Dàodé jīng* 52; cf. TTWC p.192

Speaking in the first person, the author of the *Dàodé jīng* therefore says that while people of the world all seem capable in one way or another, he places his trust in the *Dào* for all his needs, valuing the *Dào* (the “Mother”) as the source of sustenance, accepting whatever circumstances come his way:

Everyone has his sphere of expertise,  
 I alone seem dull and incapable,  
 like a rude country bumpkin.  
 I alone am different from others,  
 and value drawing sustenance from the Mother (*mǔ*).

*Dàodé jīng* 20; cf. TT1 p.63

See also: **bàoyī**, **shǒushén**, **shǒuyī** (8.5).

**shǒushén** (C) *Lit.* to guard (*shǒu*) the spirit (*shén*); to protect, preserve, maintain, or keep watch over the spirit; to be present with the spirit. The idea of preserving

and protecting the spirit is fundamental to Daoist practice – most often expressed as *shōuyī* (preserving the One), which appears several times in early texts.<sup>1</sup>

After discussing the benefits of being free from the craving for things, position and so on, the unknown author of the *Scripture on Western Ascension* (C5th) concludes by saying that the sage depends entirely on the *Dào*, foregoing dependence on worldly things. By letting go of the personal self and its mental activity, the sage guards and preserves his spirit, and is thus able to realize “union with the *Dào*” and with all creation:

The sage does not rely on the world; he does not rely on demons and spirits (supernatural beings); nor does he rely on the ten thousand things. Rather, he always makes emptiness (*xū*) his self and nonbeing (*wúwéi*) his mind. These two are called the self of no-self (*wúshēn zhī shēn*) and the mind of no-mind (*wúxīn zhī xīn*); thus the spirit is protected (*shǒushén*). Therefore, protect the spirit (*shǒushén*) and pervade all in mystery; this is union with the *Dào*.

*Xīshēng jīng* (24) 5:3b–4b; cf. *TMPS* p.249

Sages say that by “being present with the spirit” an inner sense of truth opens up, which permits its original purity to be restored:

The *dào* (way) of purity (*chún*) and simplicity (*sù*) lies solely in being present with the spirit (*shǒushén*). Be present (*shǒu*) with it and never let it go, and you will become one with the spirit (*shén*). When the essence (*jīng*) of the all-pervading One is constantly present with the spirit, then the spirit is merged with its original nature (*tiānlún*). . . . Simplicity (*sù*) implies unmixed; purity (*chún*) implies an unimpaired spirit. He who embodies purity (*chún*) and simplicity (*sù*) can be called a true man (*zhēnrén*).

*Zhuāngzǐ* 15

See also: **bào yī**, **shǒu mǔ**, **shǒu yī** (8.5).

1. See **shǒu yī** (8.5).

**shruta-jñāna** (S) *Lit.* knowledge (*jñāna*) that is heard (*shruta*); knowledge associated with language, discursive reasoning, symbols, and gestures; specifically, knowledge derived from reading or hearing the scriptures, or from listening to those who are familiar with the scriptures; one of the five or sometimes eight kinds of *jñāna* described in Jain epistemology.

Early Jain literature generally understands *shruta-jñāna* in the context of scriptural knowledge. Eight aspects of the intellect are identified as

a part of the acquisition of such knowledge. These are: a desire to hear (*shushrūshā*) a discourse; listening (*shravaṇa*) with concentration; grasping (*grahaṇa*) the meaning; remembering (*dhāraṇā*) what has been said and understood; considering (*ūha*) what has been heard; reasoning (*apoha*) and coming to a conclusion; comprehension (*artha-vijñāna*) of the meaning and forming resolutions; and putting knowledge of the principles (*tattvajñāna*) into action.<sup>1</sup> Sometimes added as an essential is the adoption of an open-minded attitude that sincerely seeks answers; while coming to a conclusion, comprehension and the forming of resolutions are combined into one.<sup>2</sup>

See also: **jñāna**, **matī-jñāna**.

1. Shri Bhuvanbhanijsoorishwarji, *Handbook of Jainology*, HJBB.
2. See Mohanlal Mehta, *Jaina Psychology*, JPM 49.

**shuhūd** (A/P) *Lit.* being a witness; witnessing, observing, experiencing; in Sufism, vision, contemplation, contemplative vision; generally, the vision of inner realities at any level of consciousness, culminating in the vision or witnessing of the divine Essence:

Sing out, “There is no god but God (*Allāh*)!”<sup>1</sup> This knowledge comes from contemplative vision (*shuhūd*), not theory or thought, and contemplative vision is the level of the possessors of knowledge, where the *Qur’ān* states: “God is witness that there is no god but Him; and the angels and possessors of knowledge (are witness, as well), maintaining justice.”<sup>2</sup>

*Shāh Ni‘mat Allāh Valī, Rasā’il, RNV2 p.179, in SSE12 p.57*

There are a number of Sufi terms that concern both the mystic’s vision or witnessing (*shuhūd*, *mushāhadah*) of God and the inner realities, as well as God as the Witness (*al-Mashhūd*, *al-Shahīd*) of the mystic. Since God is the one who reveals Himself to the witnesser, it is often said that the mystic witnesses God through God Himself:

Whenever the mystic enjoys contemplative vision (*shuhūd*) of the divine presence, after having expelled stray thoughts from his heart, protecting the mysteries therein by casting out awareness of transient things, then he becomes established in observance (*ri‘āyah*). In the tranquillity of intimacy (with God) and purity, his heart finds repose from agitation, so that he becomes worthy of the Unseen. When God sees that he has become worthy of contemplation (*shahādah*) of Him



and of attaining His Unseen, He reveals the mysteries of His presence to the mystic's heart, so that he comes to contemplate what is close to God through God Himself, for he is content in God's contentment.

*Rūzbihān, Mashrab al-Arwāḥ 9:27, MARB p.179; cf. in SSE14 p.91*

*Shuhūd* is a term commonly used by Ibn al-ʿArabī, who contrasts *shuhūd* with *wujūd* (being), reserving *wujūd* for the Divine, and *shuhūd* for all creatures. Those who dwell in God know true Being. All others are experiencing (*shuhūd*) his creation:

Everyone in *wujūd* is the Real,  
and everyone in *shuhūd* is creature.

*Ibn al-ʿArabī, Meccan Revelations 3:306.8, FMIA6 (4:362) p.20, SPK p.227*

See also: **mushāhadah**, **shāhid** (7.1).

1. *Qurʾān* 47:19, AYA.
2. *Qurʾān* 3:18.

**shurb** (A/P) *Lit.* drinking; in Sufism, a part of a family of metaphors describing the stages of advancing mystic realization and transport; hence, the sweetness and delight of inner contact with the Divine. The first beginnings of such experience are generally known as tasting (*dhawq*), followed by drinking (*shurb*), which gives way, paradoxically, to sobriety (*ṣaḥw*) – a state of clear and sober, awakened consciousness. Sufis have varied in their categorization of these stages. Some have added quenching (*rī, rīy, rayy*) and intoxication (*sukr*). Beyond these lie the states of *maḥw* (self-effacement) and *fanāʾ* (annihilation).

Hujwīrī explains the meaning of *shurb*:

The *ṣūfīs* call the sweetness of piety and the delight of miraculous grace and the pleasure of intimacy, *shurb* (drinking). As the body's drink is water, so the heart's drink is of (spiritual) pleasure and sweetness.

*Hujwīrī, Kashf al-Maḥjūb XXIV, KMM p.507, KM p.392*

Al-Qushayrī comments that the longing for divine love can never be quenched:

Whenever one's inner consciousness is purified, one's drinking (*shurb*) will not be diminished; and one whose drinking (*shurb*) has become his sustenance, becomes impatient and unable to survive without it.

I drank love (*sharbat al-ḥubb*), cup after cup,  
and the wine (*sharāb*) never finished,  
nor was my thirst quenched (*rawiya*).

They say that Yaḥyā ibn Mu‘adh Rāzī wrote to Abū Yazīd al-Bisṭāmī, telling him of someone whose thirst (*ẓama*’) would be quenched forever after drinking (*shurb*) one pitcher of wine. Abū Yazīd wrote back, saying that this was a remarkably weak state, for he knew of one who could drink all the seas in the world and yet never have his fill, always craving more.

*Al-Qushayrī, Risālah, RQQQ p.42, in SSE2 p.104*

See also: **dhawq**.

**shu‘ūr** (A/P) *Lit.* discernment, perception, consciousness, awareness, sagacity, cognizance, acquaintance with; understanding, knowing; knowledge, wisdom; divine knowledge, mystical knowledge, spiritual understanding:

Understanding (*shu‘ūr*) is the first stage of the mind’s comprehension of Reality (*Ma‘nā*).

*Tahānawī, Kashshāf Iṣṭilāḥāt al-Funūn, KIFT2 p.483; cf. in SSE9 p.1*

In *ṣūfī* terminology, understanding (*shu‘ūr*) means coming close to understanding the meanings of the divine Names and Attributes.

*Muḥammad al-Dārābī, Laṭīfah-i Ghaybī 2, LGMD p.142*

**simḥa** (He) *Lit.* bliss, joy. See **bliss (in Judaism)**.

**sleep of the faculties** A state of rapture in which the senses and mental faculties, especially memory, imagination and reasoned understanding, are entirely suspended, a term used especially by Teresa of Ávila; a state which she also equates with both the prayer of quiet<sup>1</sup> and the prayer of union.<sup>2</sup> St Teresa is not always entirely consistent in her terminology, something she admits and attributes to the on-going development of her understanding.<sup>3</sup>

Christian mystics have commonly associated this state with that described by the lover in the *Song of Songs*, who writes, “I sleep, but my heart is awake.”<sup>4</sup> Commenting on this verse, Luis de la Puente writes that in this state, not only the senses, but also the internal faculties, are asleep. From the outside, it appears as if the person were really asleep:

The soul slumbers wholly, not only as to the senses, but likewise as to the internal faculties. . . . It acts not, but is acted upon. It moves not, but is moved by a higher spirit.

*Luis de la Puente, On the Song of Songs 8:7, EMCC, in SSM2 p.262*

He also says that prior to this, as the soul progresses towards a deeper contemplation, there is a sleep of the senses in which the internal faculties are not entirely quiescent or suspended. It is

a most perfect sleep, wherein the soul sleeps to all things that are of the senses, and is well-nigh dead to them, that it may contemplate only things heavenly and eternal.

*Luis de la Puente, On the Song of Songs 8:7, EMCC, in SSM2 p.261*

John of the Cross paraphrases the same verse:

Although I sleep with respect to my natural self, ceasing to labour, my heart is awake, being supernaturally lifted up in supernatural knowledge.

*John of the Cross, Ascent of Mount Carmel 2:14.11; cf. CWJC1 p.118*

Likewise, Gregory of Nyssa:

The soul, enjoying alone the contemplation of being, will not awake for anything that arouses sensual pleasure. After lulling to sleep every bodily activity, it receives the vision of God in a divine wakefulness with pure and naked intuition.

*Gregory of Nyssa, On Canticles 10, PG44 cols.992c ff.; cf. GGG p.242*

See also: **prayer of union, rapture, suspension of the faculties.**

1. Teresa of Ávila, *Life* 16, *CWTA1* p.96.
2. Teresa of Ávila, *Testimonies* 5, *CWTA1* p.328.
3. Teresa of Ávila, *Interior Castle* 4:2, *CWTA2* p.238.
4. *Song of Songs* 5:2, *JB*.

**sleep paralysis** Transient paralysis, partial or total, of skeletal muscles, together with an absent or diminished response to normal physical reflexes, that occurs around the time of awakening from sleep, or less often while falling asleep. The individual is conscious but cannot speak or move any part of the body, and has only minimal control over blinking and breathing. Stimuli such as

touch or sound may terminate the episode, which usually has a duration of seconds to minutes. Symptoms can occur in healthy individuals or may be associated with certain diseases. Several studies have concluded that many or most people will experience sleep paralysis at least once or twice in their lives.

Sleep paralysis may be accompanied by terrifying and vivid hallucinations and an acute sense of danger. The hallucinatory element to sleep paralysis makes it even more likely that someone will interpret the experience as a dream, since completely fanciful or dreamlike objects may appear in the room alongside normal vision.

Such hallucinations generally consist of images or voices. The person may feel that someone is standing near or beside them or they may hear strange sounds. These may be dreamlike, possibly causing the person to think that they are still dreaming. A common experience is the feeling of a weight on the chest, as if underneath someone or some heavy object. These experiences can be frightening and, though there can be some body movement, the individual usually finds it very difficult to move:

I dreamed that my mother was sitting in a rocking chair, and she said to me, "Do you know you're dreaming?" I replied, "By gosh, I am, aren't I?" That ended the dream, and it seemed that I had no sooner said "By gosh, I am" than I awoke in the physical body, in bed. I was conscious, but unable to move; I could not utter a sound, could not move my eyelids. This condition prevailed for about three minutes, and all the time my body kept twitching, especially the limbs. Then I suddenly became normal. About two seconds later, a loud rap sounded – as if someone had struck the iron of the bed a blow with a heavy mallet. The noise was so loud that I 'ducked', as it rather frightened me.... Remember, I was perfectly conscious for about two seconds before this rap sounded.

*Sylvan Muldoon, Projection of the Astral Body, PABM p.42*

The phenomenon of sleep paralysis is well-documented in different countries and cultures, where it is typically understood as an encounter with a ghost, a devil, a demon, or other such entity. Among African Americans, it is popularly known as 'the witch riding your back' or 'the devil riding your back'. In Cambodian, Laotian and Thai culture, it is referred to as *pee umm* and *khmout sukkhot*, names for an event in which the person is asleep and dreaming that they are being held down by one or more ghosts. The individual usually feels that he is awake, but is unable to move or make any noise.

In the Hmong culture of southern China and adjacent areas of Vietnam, Laos and Thailand, sleep paralysis is known as *dab tsog* (Lao, crushing demon). In Vietnamese culture, it is referred to as *ma de* (held down by a

ghost) or *bong de* (held down by a shadow). It is believed that a ghost has entered the body, causing the paralysed state. In Sri Lanka, it is known as *amuku be* or *amuku pei* (the ghost that forces one down). In Icelandic folk culture, sleep paralysis is generally called having a *mara*. *Mara* is an old Icelandic word for a nightmare, but has come to mean a devil that sits on one's chest at night, trying to suffocate the victim. In New Guinea, people refer to the phenomenon as *suk ninmyo*, and believe it to originate from sacred trees that use human 'essence' to sustain their life. The trees are said to feed on this essence during the night, so as to not disturb the human beings' daily life, but sometimes people wake unnaturally during the feeding, resulting in the paralysis. Similar terms and explanations have been recorded from the folk cultures of China, Japan, Korea, Pakistan, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Zimbabwe, Turkey, Greece, Cyprus, Malta, and Hungary. Some Western researchers have suggested that reports of alien abduction and ghostly encounters have resulted from episodes of sleep paralysis.

Very little is known about the physiology of sleep paralysis, but it is thought to be closely related to the paralysis that accompanies REM (rapid eye movement) sleep, which occurs when the subject is dreaming. Sleep paralysis is hence understood as a persistence of such paralysis, while the brain has awakened. Scientifically, it is believed that the brain paralyzes the muscles to prevent possible injury during dreams, since some body parts may otherwise move during dreaming. If the person wakes up suddenly, the brain may still think that it is dreaming, and sustains the paralysis.

Some studies have suggested that various factors can increase the likelihood of experiencing sleep paralysis. These include: sleeping in a face upwards (supine) position; irregular sleeping schedules, naps, sleeping in, and sleep deprivation; increased stress, including sudden changes in environment and lifestyle; and lucid dreaming immediately preceding the episode.<sup>1</sup>

From an esoteric perspective, sleep paralysis seems to have something in common with the withdrawal of consciousness from the limbs and body that accompanies meditation and concentration at the eye centre. It is also said that sleep occurs when the attention is withdrawn from the body, to the centre behind the eyes, and then drops down to the throat or lower centres. Dreaming takes place when the attention is semi-conscious at the throat centre; deep sleep when it drops to the heart and navel centres.<sup>2</sup>

See also: **astral projection, avasthā, lucid dreaming, near-death experience (8.3), out-of-the-body experience.**

1. Summary largely derived from "sleep paralysis," *Wikipedia*, ret. October 2008.
2. Maharaj Sawan Singh, *Spiritual Gems* 145, 147, 163, 194, 200, *SG* pp.221, 225, 266, 300, 324.

**sokushin jōbutsu** (J) *Lit.* present (*soku*) + body (*shin*) + becoming (*jō*) a *buddha* (*butsu*); becoming a *buddha* in this very body; attaining enlightenment in the present lifetime; a term used by Kūkai (774–835), founder of the Japanese *Shingon* (‘True Word’) school of esoteric Buddhism.

Kūkai was the author of several books, including *Sokushin jōbutsugi* (‘The Principle of Becoming a *Buddha* in This Very Body’). He maintained that the practices of esoteric Buddhism could lead to enlightenment in the present lifetime, in contrast to the beliefs of the gradual schools who believed that it took many lifetimes to attain that goal. Kūkai claimed that this was possible through the intervention and power of the celestial *buddha* Mahāvairochana, who is regarded as the *dharmakāya* (Reality body). He maintained that the power of Mahāvairochana could bring rainfall, prevent disease and famine, and lead to enlightenment in the present lifetime. Kūkai taught a version of standard esoteric or tantric practices, including *maṇḍala* rituals, recitation of *mantras* and *dhāraṇīs*, the use of *mudrās* and so on, the intention being to transform the body, speech and mind of the practitioner into the mind of Mahāvairochana to such an extent that the practitioner also becomes a *buddha*.

Kūkai taught that there was only one true teaching of the Buddha, and he promoted his teaching as superior to those Buddhist schools which taught gradual progress towards enlightenment over several lifetimes. As such, his doctrine, with its attractive esoteric incantations and rituals, proved more popular not only with many Buddhist monks, but also with the general public. Enjoying the support of the ruling emperor, Kūkai wielded considerable political influence, becoming the senior administrator in the Buddhist hierarchy and establishing his teachings and practices in a number of major monasteries. Following the standard pattern in all such movements, however, later lineages fell into conflict, with the rise of varying interpretations of the doctrine and the consequent establishment of different sub-schools and sects.

Kūkai’s *Shingon* teaching and its associated practices proved influential among other Buddhist schools, and were adopted, with variations, by the esoteric *Tendai* school, as well as the syncretic *Shugendō* tradition, which merged native Japanese folk beliefs with elements of *Shintō*, Daoism and various Buddhist schools, especially the *Tendai* and *Shingon* traditions. Among the various Buddhist teachers to embrace the possibility of enlightenment in the present lifetime was Nichiren Daishōnin (1222–1282), who taught exclusive devotion to the *Lotus Sūtra*, believing it to contain the essence of the entire teachings of the Buddha regarding transmigration, the laws of *karma*, and the means of attaining liberation and enlightenment. Practices include recitation of passages from the *Lotus Sūtra* and daily chanting of the *mantra*: “*Namu myōhō renge kyō* (Praise to the *Sūtra* of the *Lotus Blossom* of the Wondrous Dharma).”

See also: **daimoku** (8.5).

**solace (spiritual)** Spiritual comfort, consolation, blessing, or refreshment in difficult times; a state of spiritual joy and well-being; a state of grace; an experience of bliss, ecstasy, love, or devotion that refreshes the struggling soul; feelings of inner sweetness, tenderness, and devotion; divine encouragement to persevere on the spiritual path.

Such solace, says Richard Rolle, arises from an underlying “love for God”:

A great and wondrous marvel it seems that mortal man may be seized with such high love for God that he feels nothing but heavenly solace in his most secret heart. Like the sound of an organ, he rises on high to contemplate his highest desire.

*Richard Rolle, Fire of Love 1:4; cf. FLML p.27*

Therefore, he prays:

O love everlasting, enflame my soul to love God,  
so that nothing may burn in me but His embraces. . . .  
Come into my heart, and fill it with Your clearest sweetness. . . .  
Henceforward, sweetest Lord, go not from me,  
abide with me continually in Your sweetness;  
For only Your presence is solace to me,  
and only Your absence leaves me heavy.

*Richard Rolle, Mending of Life 11; cf. FLML p.229*

See also: **comfort (spiritual), consolation.**

**sopadhishesha nirvāṇa** (S), **saupādisesa nibbāna** (Pa), **phung po lhag ma dang bcas pa'i mya ngan las 'das pa** (T), **yōuyú nièpán** (C), **uyo nehan** (J)  
*Lit.* *nirvāṇa* (*mya ngan las 'das pa, nièpán*) with (*sa, ma dang bcas pa, yōu*) limiting (*upādhi*) remainder (*shesha, lhag ma, yú*); incomplete *nirvāṇa*; *nirvāṇa* with fuel (Pa. *upādi*) remaining, an allusion to the mental and bodily aggregates (*skandhas, phung po*), which remain as long as life lasts; final liberation from further activity or rebirth in this world; *nirvāṇa* attained during human life through the elimination of imperfections (*āśhrava*) and impurities (*klesha*), but in which the five aggregates (*skandhas, phung po*) that serve as a basis for the sense of self-identity remain, and the enlightened person is still subject to suffering and the effect of past *karma*, although no new *karma* is incurred; also called *kilesa-parinibbāna* (Pa. extinction of impurities); contrasted with *anupadhishesha nirvāṇa* (*nirvāṇa* without

limitation or remainder) or *parinirvāṇa* (highest *nirvāṇa*), which is the state entered at the death of an *arhat*.

See also: **nirvāṇa**.

**spirit travel (Native North American)** Leaving the body and exploring the spirit world or the material world, sometimes assuming the form of animals or birds in the physical world.

The Lakota holy man John Lame Deer (1903–1976) quotes a member of his community who had been to visit the Paiute holy man Wovoka (‘Wood Cutter’, c. 1856–1932) in order to check out the veracity of Wovoka’s teaching and learn about the ghost dance. During the course of the dance, the man left his body. Later, he reported:

I fell down as dead. I WAS dead. I found myself on this new earth, and  
I saw my relative there who died last year; I saw him as I see you now.  
And I saw his wife, who was killed by white soldiers a long time ago.

*Anon., in Seeker of Visions, LDSV p.239*

Frank Fools Crow (c. 1890–1989), a greatly respected Oglala Lakota spiritual leader and healer, speaks of the difference between true holy people, medicine people, and ordinary people, and the ability of holy people to spirit travel:

Power takes over a holy person’s life. It affects everything about us. So our knowledge and understanding increases faster, and before long our relationship to the higher powers and to power itself is different from that of medicine people. Also, holy men and women have more ways to obtain power and to set it into motion. We can heal others and ourselves more easily and quickly. We achieve peaks more often and our experience of them is deeper and more intense. Holy people can make spirit-travel trips to the dwelling places of the higher powers, and we can be transformed into animal or bird creatures who can go among people to see what is going on. It is holy people who are called upon by people and communities when situations are the more serious, and it is holy people who achieve the most impressive results. That is why there are only a few of us at any one time, and why we are the ones who can show people the fullness of power in motion. So we are called holy men or holy women.

But all medicine people are different from ordinary people. They may, for the most part, behave and look like everyone else, but they are not. The way they think is different. What happens to them is different. They have insights that other people do not have. And, it is



these thoughts and insights that enable them to reach the peaks that are required for their work. Another thing is that when we are compared to people who do not cure or heal, and even to medicine people, we are more emotional. This enables us to reach the peaks more easily and quickly. Because of our emotions, when we do a ritual or treat a person we can quickly change our intensity as we move toward a climax.

Another thing we holy people know is who we are. We have a clear self-image. To say this is not bragging. It is the truth. We know we are part of Sioux history, and that when we have become hollow bones (pure channels) there is no limit to what the higher powers can do in and through us in spiritual things. Even our physical bodies cannot contain us, because our spirits can step out of our bodies and spirit travel. We dream and vision and have fantastic thoughts. This begins while we are still children. Because of it, we are always ready for *Wakan-Tanka* (Great Spirit) and the helpers to take us places and show us things that others, because of their having closed minds, may never see. The power that we receive is for curing, healing, prophesying, solving problems, and finding lost people or objects. It is also for spreading love, transforming, and assuring peace and fertility. It is not to give us power over others because the source of power is not ourselves. It comes to use and move through us as hollow bones, but it belongs to *Wakan-Tanka* and the helpers. They are the Source, and all thanks should go to them.

*Frank Fools Crow, in Fools Crow, FCWM pp.28–29*

Thomas Mails (1920–2001), an American artist and writer who developed a long-term association with Native American traditions, asks Fools Crow about his spirit travelling:

“When exactly do you make these spirit trips? Is it every time you are alone in the purification lodge (sweat lodge, *inipi*)?”

“Not every time, or even most of the time. The trips are special gifts, and usually happen during or just after some important event. I am in there and I get invitations from *Wakan-Tanka* and the helpers. Not all at once, but maybe one or two. Whoever wants to talk to me. They are watching, and know when I need this.”

“How do the invitations come?”

“Through the hot stones in the fire pit (in the sweat lodge). They speak to me and bring messages from the higher powers.”

“And how do you travel from the lodge to where they are?”

“I shake my rattle and sing my song. Then I lay my rattle down and pull my arms, bent at the elbows, tightly to my sides. With my eyes closed and my hands cupped, I concentrate as powerfully as I can

upon the idea of my being lifted up. I begin to shiver, and I stomp my feet. Before long I feel myself preparing to soar up like an eagle into space. Maybe it is more like the first firing of a rocket as it begins to leave its launching pad. Pretty soon, I feel my body coming apart, and I both feel and see my spirit leaving it. My spirit looks like me, just like I look when I am in my body, and I am the same age. Up and up I go to where the person is that I am going to visit. It only takes me seconds to get there, although I see myself speeding past birds, then clouds, then planets and stars. I even pass through what the white man calls the Milky Way."

"Then the Persons, even though they enclose you within the lodge, are still a long ways away?"

"You must understand that while the lodge is very little, only four feet high and eight feet across, when I am in it, it becomes as big as the universe itself. I do not feel confined; in fact, I am not conscious of any walls at all. It is as if I am floating in space. This is a wonderful feeling, and I wish everyone in the world could share it. Then there wouldn't be any people who don't believe in *Wakan-Tanka*!"

"But the speed at which you travel ...?"

"I go faster than rockets do. I have heard about the speed of light, and what I do is more like that," he said and slapped his leg with enthusiasm. Then in a moment he grew quiet and his eyes softened. "Actually," he said, "this spirit travel I do has frightened both of my wives."

He knew that would get my attention, and waited for me to ask, "Why?"

"Because I faint when I spirit travel, and I remain unconscious until my spirit returns to my body. Sometimes I am gone for as much as two days. Fannie and Kate have had to stay with me and watch over me during this time and they have told me that sometimes they are afraid I have died."

"Are you aware of time when you are out of the body?"

"No."

"Do you, as Black Elk did when he spirit-travelled, see your ancestors encamped in a beautiful land up in the sky?"

"No."

"Is anyone there with the powers when you visit them?"

"No. All I see is the lights." ...

"Spirit travel will be a mind-boggling thing for many of my readers," I commented. "Should I tell them that it is a thing they also can do?"

"Of course," he replied brightly, "but it will probably not happen until they have tried to do it several times. At least not until

*Wakan-Tanka* and the helpers know they are ready. As I said, this is a very special gift, and it is not given until it is deserved. It did not happen to me until I had become an experienced holy man.”

*Thomas Mails, Fools Crow, FCWM pp.95–96, 98*

Black Elk (1863–1950), another well-known Lakota holy man, describes an experience of spirit travel that came upon him when he was still a young man, while he was performing the ghost dance (a form of traditional circle dancing) at Wounded Knee in 1890. This was not his first experience of this kind. On his first day of dancing, he experiences sensations that were to precede the temporary departure of his spirit from the body:

There came a strong shivering all over my body, and I knew that the power was in me. . . . As I danced, with Good Thunder and Kicking Bear holding my arms between them, I had the queer feeling that I knew, and I seemed to be lifted clear off the ground.

*Black Elk, Black Elk Speaks, BES p.240*

The following day, his spirit left his body:

Before we started dancing next day, Kicking Bear offered a prayer, saying: “Father, Great Spirit, behold these people! They shall go forth today to see their relatives, and yonder they shall be happy, day after day, and their happiness will not end.” Then we began dancing, and most of the people wailed and cried as they danced, holding hands in a circle; but some of them laughed with happiness. Now and then some one would fall down like dead, and others would go staggering around and panting before they would fall. While they were lying there like dead, they were having visions, and we kept on dancing and singing, and many were crying for the old way of living and that the old religion might be with them again.

After a while I began to feel very queer. First, my legs seemed to be full of ants. I was dancing with my eyes closed, as the others did. Suddenly, it seemed that I was swinging off the ground and not touching it any longer. The queer feeling came up from my legs and was in my heart now. It seemed I would glide forward like a swing, and then glide back again in longer and longer swoops. There was no fear with this, just a growing happiness.

I must have fallen down, but I felt as though I had fallen off a swing when it was going forward, and I was floating head first through the air. My arms were stretched out, and all I saw at first was a single eagle feather right in front of me. Then the feather was a spotted eagle

dancing on ahead of me with his wings fluttering, and he was making the shrill whistle that is his. My body did not move at all, but I looked ahead and floated fast toward where I looked.

There was a ridge right in front of me, and I thought I was going to run into it, but I went right over it. On the other side of the ridge I could see a beautiful land where many, many people were camping in a great circle. I could see that they were happy. . . . The air was clear and beautiful with a living light that was everywhere. . . . Then I fell back into my body, and as I did this I heard voices all around and above me, and I was sitting on the ground.

*Black Elk, Black Elk Speaks, BES pp.241–43*

And again, in the dance the following day:

As we were dancing I had the same queer feeling I had before, as though my feet were off the earth and swinging. Kicking Bear and Good Thunder were holding my arms. After a while it seemed they let go of me, and once more I floated head first, face down, with arms extended, and the spotted eagle was dancing there ahead of me again, and I could hear his shrill whistle and his scream. I saw the ridge again, and as I neared it there was a deep, rumbling sound, and out of it there leaped a flame. But I glided over it. There were six villages ahead of me in the beautiful land that was all clear and green in living light. . . .

Against the tree there was a man standing with arms held wide in front of him. I looked hard at him, and I could not tell what people he came from. He was not a *wasichu* (white man) and he was not an Indian. His hair was long and hanging loose and, on the left side of his head, he wore an eagle feather. His body was strong and good to see, and it was painted red. I tried to recognize him, but I could not make him out. He was a very fine-looking man. While I was staring hard at him, his body began to change and became very beautiful with all colours of light, and around him there was light. He spoke like singing: “My life is such that all earthly beings and growing things belong to me. Your Father, the Great Spirit, has said this. You too must say this.” Then he went out like a light in a wind. . . . I saw again how beautiful the day was – the sky all blue and full of yellow light above the greening earth. And I saw that all the people were beautiful and young. There were no old ones there, nor children either – just people of about one age, and beautiful.

*Black Elk, Black Elk Speaks, BES pp.244–46*

See also: **ghost dance** (8.4), **sweat lodge** (8.5).

**spiritual betrothal, spiritual espousal** A promise of the divine marriage or union yet to be experienced; a stage in spiritual ascent prior to divine union, in which the soul still sees itself as separate from the Divine; a stage in which the soul contemplates the Divine, but is not yet united to Him; a term used by Richard of St Victor, John of the Cross, Teresa of Ávila, Jan van Ruysbroek, and others.

Mystics have had differing experiences, and have often used the same or similar terms or metaphors by which to describe them. Consequently, although many have used the terms 'spiritual betrothal' or 'spiritual espousal' for a stage on the way to complete union, it is not possible to establish exact parallels between such uses.

Richard of St Victor describes the contemplative ascent to union as the "steep stairway of love", dividing it into four stages: betrothal, marriage, wedlock, and fruitfulness of the soul. Betrothal, he says, is the awakening of divine longing. Here, the soul "thirsts for the Beloved", longing to experience the Divine. "The Spirit comes to the soul, and seems sweeter than honey. . . . Then the soul with pertinacity demands more."<sup>1</sup>

Teresa of Ávila introduces imagery associated with the betrothal and marriage customs of her day. The advance towards spiritual betrothal takes place in the first of three stages or mansions in which the soul experiences an increasing degree of union with God. In the first, the couple are introduced, so to speak. In the second, the newly introduced couple spend an increasing amount of time in each other's company, getting to know one another. It is here that the betrothal actually takes place, when "His Majesty . . . gives the soul raptures that draw it out of its senses. For if it were to see itself so near this great Majesty while in its senses, it would perhaps die."<sup>2</sup> Here, the faculties are also put to sleep. The third stage is the spiritual marriage. These three stages are the last of St Teresa's seven mansions of the soul.<sup>3</sup>

John of the Cross also speaks of the soul's betrothal to the divine Word as a part of the soul's ascent to God:

By this spiritual flight . . . is denoted a lofty estate and union of love wherein after much spiritual exercise God places the soul. . . . (And this) is called spiritual betrothal with the Word, the Son of God. . . .

At the beginning, when this happens for the first time, God communicates to the soul great things concerning Himself, beautifying it with greatness and majesty, decking it with gifts and virtues, and clothing it with knowledge and honour of God, just as if it were a bride on the day of her betrothal.

And upon this happy day, . . . being adorned with the good things that I am describing, she enters into an estate of peace and delight and sweetness of love, . . . wherein she does naught else but relate and sing the wonders of her Beloved.

*John of the Cross, Spiritual Canticle 14–15:2; cf. CWJC2 p.247*

Yet the experience of spiritual betrothal is only a preparation for the union of spiritual marriage:

This is a high state of spiritual betrothal between the soul and the Word, in which the Bridegroom favours it and frequently pays it loving visits wherein it receives wonderful delight. Yet these delights are not comparable to those of marriage, for these are preparations for the union of marriage. Although it is true that this betrothal occurs in the soul that is greatly purified of every affection for creatures – for the spiritual betrothal is not wrought until this comes to pass – the soul still needs other positive preparations from God. It needs His visits, and gifts by which He purifies, beautifies and refines it further so it might be suitably prepared for so lofty a union.

*John of the Cross, Living Flame of Love 3:25, CWJC p.683*

Relating to the common division of spiritual aspirants into the beginners, the progressives and the perfect, John of the Cross also assigns the purgative way or way of purification to beginners, the spiritual betrothal or the illuminative way to progressives, and the spiritual marriage or way of union to the perfect.<sup>4</sup>

See also: **interior castle, prayer of union, spiritual marriage.**

1. Richard of St Victor, *Steep Stairway of Love*, *PL196* cols.1207ff., in *MSSC* p.139.
2. Teresa of Ávila, *Interior Castle* 6:4.2, *CWT2* p.379.
3. Teresa of Ávila, *Interior Castle* 5–7, *CWT2* pp.335–450.
4. John of the Cross, *Spiritual Canticle, Prologue 2*.

**spiritual experience** See **mystical experience**.

**spiritual marriage, divine marriage** The union of the soul with God, the divine Word or the spiritual form of the master; part of a family of metaphors using the imagery of human love to convey some idea of the intensity of divine love; an imagery found in the literature of probably all mystical traditions.

Early instances of the imagery appear in the Greek mysteries, where the ceremony of the mysteries resembled a marriage. The Greek gods, too, were noted for their alliances, which perhaps had some allegorical meaning. The biblical *Song of Songs* is also replete with the imagery of lover and beloved, understood by both Jewish and Christian commentators to symbolize the soul and the divine Beloved. The gnostics, drawing liberally on Greek, Jewish and Christian traditions, also made extensive use of this imagery.

The Christian gospels themselves contain a number of references to the bridegroom and to marriages in a variety of contexts. Of these, the story of the marriage feast at Cana,<sup>1</sup> Jesus' parables of the bridegroom and the ten virgins,<sup>2</sup> and the marriage of the king's son<sup>3</sup> are the most relevant in this context. In all these, the marriage represents the inner union of the soul with the divine Beloved.

The same imagery is met in many other places in the mystic literature of the early Christian period. In the *Gospel of Philip*, the worldly marriage is compared with its divine counterpart, pointing out that just as a worldly marriage is encompassed by privacy, so too is the divine:

No one can know when the husband and the wife have intercourse with one another except the two of them. Indeed, marriage in the world is a mystery for those who have taken a wife. If there is a hidden quality to the marriage of defilement, how much more is the undefiled marriage a true mystery! It is not fleshly, but pure. It belongs not to desire, but to the will. It belongs not to the darkness of the night, but to the day and the light.

If a marriage is open to the public, it has become prostitution, and the bride plays the harlot not only when she is impregnated by another man but even if she slips out of her bedroom and is seen. Let her show herself only to her father, and her mother, and to the friend of the bridegroom, and the sons of the bridegroom. These are permitted to enter every day into the bridal chamber. But let the others yearn just to listen to her voice and to enjoy her ointment, and let them feed from the crumbs that fall from the table, like the dogs.<sup>4</sup> Bridegrooms and brides belong to the bridal chamber. No one shall be able to see the Bridegroom with the bride unless he become such a one.

*Gospel of Philip* 81–82, NHS20 pp.204–7

A simpler comparison of human marriage with the divine marriage appears in the *Acts of Thomas*. One of the characters is addressing her husband, who has asked her about her love for Jesus:

You saw that marriage that was passing, . . .  
 but this marriage continues forever;  
 That was a partnership of corruption (changeability),  
 but this of eternal life. . . .  
 That bed was strewn with coverlets that grow old,  
 but this with love and faith.  
 You are a bridegroom who will pass away,  
 and will be dissolved;  
 But Jesus is a true bridegroom,  
 enduring forever immortal;

That dowry was of money and robes that grow old,  
but this is of the Living Word that never passes away.

*Acts of Thomas 124; cf. ANT p.419*

An interesting use of the imagery is also found in one of the Nag Hammadi gnostic tractates, the *Expository Treatise on the Soul*. An allegory is related of the soul: how she travels out from God, gets lost and entangled in the creation, and eventually returns to her divine home under the guidance of a saviour, her bridegroom. In the story, the soul is cast as a pure virgin. Leaving her Father's house, she descends to the physical creation where she takes one lover after another in search of a fulfilling love. She becomes a prostitute, with every robber, adulterer and selfish person in creation taking advantage of her, her many lovers representing the multitude of attachments and entanglements with the physical creation in which the soul, through the agency of the mind and senses, becomes enmeshed.

The Father or Lord is an ocean of love, and the soul is a drop of that ocean. The essence of the soul, therefore, is also love. Consequently, the attention that the soul gives to the creation is essentially a giving of her essence, her life, her divine love. But she is giving it to that which is unworthy of this love and which is quite unable to appreciate it. She has therefore become a prostitute. Rather than keeping her love for one husband, the Father, she has spread it among many. She has gone out of her own house, into the world, and suffers thereby. This is the state of all souls in this world, who are constantly engaged and mentally absorbed in the affairs of physical living, sparing hardly a thought for their divine origin. They are, in fact, ignorant of their own true nature or even that they have a true nature at all. They have become like prostitutes.

Ultimately, in the allegory, the soul reaches the realization that none of these loves will ever be able to satisfy her. And, as she awakens to a higher calling, she begins to long once more for the divine home she once knew when she dwelt in purity with her Father. She becomes filled with a deep yearning for her original estate, but since she cannot return to God of her own accord, an intermediary or helper is sent to her. This is the saviour – her Brother, the Firstborn Son or Bridegroom, all being terms for the divine Word and its incarnation as a master. The soul and the saviour are then reunited in the divine marriage, the internal and eternal union of the soul with the divine Beloved:

That marriage is not like the carnal marriage. There, those who have intercourse with one another are satisfied with that intercourse, and afterwards as if it had been a burden, they leave behind them the annoyance of physical desire and turn their faces from each other. But this marriage is quite different. Once they unite with one another, they become a single life.

*On the Soul 132; cf. NHS21 pp.156–57*



This union is also the union that the soul had enjoyed before she left her divine home:

For they were originally joined to one another when they were with the Father. . . . This marriage has brought them back together again, and the soul has been joined to her true love, her real master. . . .

Then gradually she recognized him, and she rejoiced once more, weeping before him as she remembered the disgrace of her former widowhood. And she adorned herself still more (with greater purity and love), so that he might be pleased to stay with her. . . .

Thus when the soul had adorned herself again in her (inherent) beauty, she enjoyed (union with) her Beloved, and he also loved her. And when she had communion with him, she received from him the Seed that is the life-giving Spirit, so that by him she bears good children (the fruit of spiritual practice) and rears them. For this is the great and perfect marvel of birth. And so this marriage is made perfect by the will of the Father.

*On the Soul 133–34; cf. NHS21 pp.156–59*

“For this is the great and perfect marvel of birth” refers to fulfilment of the true and high purpose of human birth, that of marriage or union with the Divine.

From the third century, the early fathers, as well as later mystics within the Christian tradition, have used the imagery in a similar manner. Relating to the parables of Jesus, the saviour is understood as the bridegroom and the soul as the bride, and marriage as the union of the soul and God. Mystics of medieval times were especially fond of the imagery. John of the Cross describes the experience of union as the fulfilment of a process that passed through the earlier stage of spiritual betrothal:

This spiritual marriage between the soul and the Son of God, her Bridegroom, is incomparably greater than the spiritual betrothal, for it is a total transformation in the Beloved, . . . in which each surrenders the entire possession of self to the other with a certain consummation of the union of love. The soul is thereby made divine, God by participation, insofar as is possible in this life, and this is the highest estate attainable in this life. . . .

When this spiritual marriage between God and the soul is consummated, there are two natures in one spirit and love of God. This union resembles the union of the light of a star or candle with the light of the sun, for that which shines is not the star or candle, but the sun, which has absorbed the other lights into itself. . . .

In this high estate of spiritual marriage, the Bridegroom reveals His wondrous secrets to the soul with great readiness and frequency,

and describes His works to her, for true and perfect love can keep nothing hidden.

*John of the Cross, Spiritual Canticle 27:2, 28:1;  
cf. CWJC (22:3) pp.560–61, CWJC2 pp.133, 137*

Luis de León likewise describes the ecstasy of this union:

The marriage of God and our soul is a source of pleasure, delight and bliss that nothing can surpass. It is never mixed with doubt or anguish or sadness; it is never tarnished; there is nothing rough or superficial about it. It is an abundant source of joy; it bathes our soul in joy; it makes us drunk with bliss.

*Luis de León, Names of Christ, Husband, NCLL pp.251–52*

See also: **bridal chamber** (7.2), **bride** (►4), **bridegroom** (7.2), **marriage** (►4), **spiritual betrothal**.

1. *John* 2:1–10; see **water into wine**.
2. *Matthew* 25:1–12; see **virgin** (►4).
3. *Matthew* 22:1–14; see **outer darkness** (4.1), **robe** (5.1).
4. *Matthew* 15:27.

**sthāna** (S) *Lit.* standing, posture; state, condition; place, dwelling; used synonymously with *avasthā* (state) when referring to the four states of consciousness (waking, dream, deep sleep, transcendental) experienced by human beings. See **avasthā**.

**sthira(a)** (S/H), **thira(a)** (H/Pu) *Lit.* steady, motionless, unmoving, unchanging; permanent, fixed, firm, stable, still; healthy; hence also, *sthīratā* (stillness, steadiness, motionlessness, composure, tranquillity); commonly used in spiritual contexts to describe the condition of the body and mind; implies good inward mental concentration; the converse of *asthira* (S. unsteady, fickle, etc.).

Stillness and steady concentration of the mind is the essence of *yoga*, requiring constant vigilance and complete control of the inner mental counterpart to the external senses:

This unwavering (*sthira*) control of the senses (*indriya dhāraṇā*) is regarded as *yoga*.

Then one becomes undistracted (*apramatta*):  
for (otherwise) *yoga* can come and go.

*Kaṭha Upanishad 2:3.11*

Stillness and tranquillity is also a part of the essential nature of the divine Sound or *Aum̐*:

The Sound (*Shabda*) is *Aum̐*.

In its ultimate reach it is tranquil, soundless, fearless,  
sorrowless, blissful, content, unwavering (*sthira*),  
unmoving (*achala*), immortal, unshaken, enduring.

*Maitrī Upanishad* 6:23

Therefore, in a section on listening to the inner sound, the *Haṭha Yoga Pradīpikā* advises:

Blocking the ears with his hands, a *muni* should listen to the inner sound (*dhvani*) with a steady (*sthira*) mind; then a state of stillness (*sthira-pāda*) is attained.

*Haṭha Yoga Pradīpikā* 4:82; cf. *HYPM* p.578

But the practice is not so easy. Persistence is required. As Arjuna complains to Kṛishṇa:

Due to the constant restlessness (*chañchalatva*) of my mind,  
I do not experience firm (*sthira*) establishment in *yoga*  
through the cultivation of balance,  
in the way you have instructed.

Truly, O Kṛishṇa, my mind is restless (*chañchala*),  
turbulent, unyielding, and strong.  
To control it, I think,  
is more difficult than controlling the wind.

*Bhagavad Gītā* 6:33–34; cf. *BGT*

And Kṛishṇa responds:

Whenever the wavering (*chañchala*)  
and fickle (*asthira*) mind wanders away,  
restrain it and lead it back to the Self (*Ātman*) alone.

*Bhagavad Gītā* 6:26

Alike to friend and foe, alike in honour and insult,  
alike in heat and cold, alike in praise and blame –  
Detached, content, of steady (*sthira*) mind,  
and whose home is not in this world –  
That man is dear to Me.

*Bhagavad Gītā* 12:18–19; cf. *BGT*

Many a devotee and spiritual practitioner has despaired of ever controlling the mind, turning to God for help. As Shankaradeva, a medieval poet-mystic of Assam, writes:

O Lord! I fall at Your feet and plead that You save my life.  
 I am suffering from the pain of sensual poison,  
     and feel as if my life is ending!  
 Wealth, youth, life, and the world –  
     all are transient and impermanent!  
 Sons and family all are unreal!  
 Whom should I consider real and meaningful in life?  
 Like water on a lotus leaf,  
     my restless mind does not remain still (*thira*)!

*Shankaradeva, Pave pari Hari; cf. in SSI9 pp.138–39*

Guru Nānak remonstrates with the mind:

O my mind, remain steady (*thir*), and do not wander away.  
 By searching around on the outside,  
     you shall only suffer great pain;  
 The ambrosial nectar (*amrit*) is found  
     within the home of your own being.

*Guru Nānak, Ādi Granth 598, AGK*

Dādū says:

For as long as the mind is not still (*thir*),  
     no contact with the Lord can be established.  
 When the mind is still (*thir*), O Dādū,  
     then He will be easily found. . . .  
 Making the mind steady (*sthir*), repeat God's Name:  
     says Dādū, there alone is God.

*Dādū, Bānī 1, Man ko ang 10:13, 15, DDB1 p.97; cf. DCMU p.138*

And Kabīr expands upon the theme:

Repeating the Name, I became motionless (*sthir*):  
     dwelling on true knowledge, I became absorbed within.  
 My soul has become one with the *Shabd* (Word),  
     like a fish that swims in the ocean.

*Kabīr, Sākhī Sangrah, Sumiran kā ang 62, KSS p.92*

In Jainism, *sthira* defines one of the many Jain categories of *karma*. *Sthira-nāma karma* is the current of *karma* that manifests as the steady or fixed

bodily parts, causing the bones, teeth and so on to be firm. Moving bodily parts such as the tongue are regarded as the manifestation of its converse, *asthira-nāma karma*. Similarly, *ātmasthiratā* is steadiness of the self or soul in meditation, implying concentration of mind. The Jain *āchārya* Haribhadra also speaks of eight stages of *dṛishṭi* (spiritual vision), of which *sthira* is the fifth.<sup>1</sup>

See also: **chañchalatā, dṛishṭi.**

1. Haribhadra, *Yogadṛishṭi Samuchchaya* 3:9.

**stillness** (Gk. *hēsychia*) A state or condition of calmness and tranquillity; outwardly, a peaceful environment; inwardly, a state of contemplation in which the mind is still; a state of inner tranquillity and mental concentration arising from and deepened by the practice of interior prayer and constant mindfulness; an attitude of silent opening to the Divine.

God is one, unchanging and eternal, while the creation is characterized at every level by change and diversity. Consequently, the only true and unchanging stillness lies in God. This association of inner stillness with divine communion is fundamental to all mystical traditions. As the biblical *Psalms* admonish: “Be still, and know that I am God,”<sup>1</sup> and likewise:

Stand in awe, and sin not:  
commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still.  
*Psalms 4:4, KJV*

Or as another standard translation interprets it:

Tremble: give up sinning,  
spend your night in quiet meditation.  
*Psalms 4:4, JB*

Plotinus (c.205–270 CE) likewise speaks of the “undisturbed stillness (*hēsychē en erēmō*)” of the soul that is “caught away, filled with God, . . . its entire being calmed; utterly resting, he has become rest itself”. He has “become the Unity, nothing within him or without inducing any diversity; no movement now, no passion, no outward-looking desire, once this ascent is achieved”.<sup>2</sup> In fact, he says that when the soul ascends to the One, it leaves behind all the faculties of perception and knowing that it uses in this world because they involve movement of the mind. “The soul,” he says, “looks down upon intelligence (*noein*), once so intimately loved, because intelligence is movement, and the soul does not want to move.”<sup>3</sup>

According to Irenaeus, the followers of the Christian gnostic Valentinus said that the divine Source Itself rests in complete stillness:

Within the invisible and ineffable heights above, there exists a perfect, pre-existent Aeon, whom they call Before-the-Beginning (*Proarchē*), Ancestor (*Propatōr*) and the Deep (*Bythos*), and describe as being invisible and incomprehensible. Eternal and unbegotten, throughout innumerable aeons, It remains in profound stillness (*hēsychia*) and tranquillity (*ēremia*).

*Irenaeus, Against Heresies I:1.1; cf. AH1 p.4, in GS p.281*

In the Orthodox tradition of Christianity, the goal of outer and inner stillness (*hēsychia*) is central to the practice of the Jesus prayer, a repetition performed with the attention focused upon the heart and breathing:

Let mindfulness of Jesus be united to your breathing, and then you will know the blessings of stillness (*hēsychia*).

*John Klimakos, Ladder of Divine Ascent 27, PG88 1112c, in PCT4 p.265*

The main object of the monk is to achieve the stillness of prayer in the heart, with the mind, free from reflections, keeping quiet watch like a sentry to make sure that nothing enters into the heart from without. Where this state of sacred silence exists, heart and mind feed on the Name of Christ and His commandments.

*Archimandrite Sophrony, Monk of Mount Athos, MMA p.76*

It is an essential prerequisite for communion with God:

Keeping his attention fixed within himself, he (a monk) should commune with God in stillness (*hēsychia*), guarding his thoughts from distraction and his intellect from curiosity.

*Isaiah the Solitary, On Guarding the Spirit 23, Philokalia, PCT1 p.27*

Such inner stillness entails the cessation of all thought:

Stillness (*hēsychia*) means the shedding of all thoughts for a time, even those which are divine and engendered by the Spirit, otherwise through giving them our attention because they are good we will lose what is better.

*Gregory of Sinai, On Stillness 9, Philokalia, PCT4 p.270*

Stillness (*hēsychia*) is an undisturbed state of the mind (*nous*), the calm of a free and joyful soul, the tranquil unwavering stability of the heart in God, the contemplation of light, the knowledge of the mysteries of God, consciousness of wisdom by virtue of a pure mind, . . . the rapture of the mind (*nous*), intercourse with God, an unsleeping watchfulness,

spiritual prayer, untroubled repose in the midst of great hardship and, finally, solidarity and union with God.

*Nikētas Stēthatos, On the Inner Nature of Things 64, Philokalia; cf. PCT4 p.125*

Stillness leads to inner purity:

We must remember, too, that stillness (*hēsychia*) is the highest gift of all, and that without it we cannot be purified and come to know our weakness.

*Peter of Damaskos, Treasury of Divine Knowledge 1, Philokalia, PCT3 p.194*

Conversely, detachment from the world leads to inner stillness:

We should be detached from all things, whether good or bad, so that nothing perturbs us, and we reach a state of stillness (*hēsychia*).

*Peter of Damaskos, Treasury of Divine Knowledge 1, Philokalia, PCT3 p.149*

Stillness cuts at the root of negativity, and leads on to love:

Stillness (*hēsychia*) helps us by making evil inoperative. . . . It is the most direct support in attaining dispassion. The mind (*nous*) cannot be still unless the body is still also. . . .

Of all the commandments, . . . the most comprehensive is to love God and our neighbour. This love is made firm through abstaining from material things, and through stillness (*hēsychia*) of thoughts (*logismoi*).

*Mark the Ascetic, Made Righteous by Works 30–31, 223, Philokalia;  
cf. PCT1 pp.128, 145*

Other Christian mystics have also described this inner stillness. Meister Eckhart says that perfect stillness is required to hear the divine Word:

The heavenly Father speaks one Word and He speaks it eternally. In this Word, He expends all His might; for in this Word, He utters His entire divine nature and all creatures. The Word lies hidden in the soul, unnoticed and unheard unless room is made for it in the ground of hearing, otherwise it is not heard; but all voices and all sounds must cease, and perfect stillness must reign there, a still silence.

*Meister Eckhart, Sermons 35; cf. MEEP p.95, STE1 p.257*

Walter Hilton similarly maintains that it is the “Holy Spirit” and “His Voice” that bring about this stillness:

Stillness is brought about by the Holy Spirit in the contemplation of God, for His Voice is so sweet and so powerful that it silences the clamour of all other voices in the soul. It is a mighty Voice, sounding gently in a pure soul.

*Walter Hilton, Ladder of Perfection 2:40, LPH p.224*

François de Sales observes that people with busy and active minds, given to much introspection, are likely to disturb their own inner stillness by unnecessary mental analysis:

Usually, people with such types of minds are easy prey to disturbances at prayer. If God affords them the stillness of His presence, they deliberately renounce it by studying their own reactions, by scrutinizing their contentment to see if it is sufficient, anxious to discover whether their peace is really peaceful, their tranquillity really tranquil. So much so that, instead of calmly letting their wills experience the charms of God's presence, they busy their minds with analysing the sensations they experience. . . . Consequently, the man to whom God grants this loving tranquillity of soul in prayer must do all he can to refrain from examining either himself or the stillness he enjoys. If we are to preserve that blissful rest, we must not peer into it inquisitively.

*François de Sales, Love of God 6:10, LGFS pp.244–45*

Nothing, he says, is worth exchanging for this stillness:

Once a soul rests peacefully in God, it will never exchange this stillness for all the most satisfying things of earth.

*François de Sales, Love of God 6:8, LGFS p.241*

It is a blessing in which the soul is aware of the divine presence:

Blessed, indeed, is the man who lovingly preserves the awareness of God's presence in the stillness of his heart. He will be drawing ever closer to God – imperceptible though it may seem – his whole soul filled with the infinite charm of it.

*François de Sales, Love of God 7:1, LGFS pp.272–73*

Californian mystic Nancy Mayorga, writing in the mid-twentieth century, speaks of experiencing a stillness of mind and body when in the presence of her *guru*, Swami Prabhavananda, and of being held spellbound by his gaze and his words:

I felt a stillness in me that I had never felt before, that is past describing. Every atom of me was still and listening, held by his words and his



look. Suspended. Breath and everything. And the beauty of what he was imparting to me, not alone in words, filled me with astonishment and bliss. He kept looking at me deeply, to make sure I understood, asking me if I understood. And if I had not been so transfixed, I would have wept for joy.

Nancy Mayorga, *Hunger of the Soul*, HSDM p.109

Later, this stillness becomes a constant inner companion during periods of meditation:

I just strive to hold the mind in that deep, deep state, which is incredibly deep. No bliss, no ecstasy, just stillness. Incredible!

Nancy Mayorga, *Hunger of the Soul*, HSDM pp.118–19

It is, she says, an experience of God:

When you surrender to that absolute stillness, that all-pervasive beneficent light, that inexpressibly sweet, sweet bliss, there is no doubt, no doubt at all, in your heart or in your mind, that you are experiencing God.

Nancy Mayorga, *Hunger of the Soul*, HSDM p.123

See also: **hesychasm** (8.5), **hesychast** (7.1), **hēsychia**.

1. *Psalms* 46:10, *KJV*.
2. Plotinus, *Enneads* 6:9.11; cf. *PEC* p.360.
3. Plotinus, *Enneads* 6:7.34; cf. *PA7* pp.194–95, *PEC* (35) p.338.

**strī-moksha, strī-nirvāṇa** (S) *Lit.* liberation (*moksha*) of women (*strī*). The two main Jain sects differ over whether or not women are able to attain liberation. *Digambaras* maintain that they cannot do so, while *Shvetāmbaras* believe that women are not precluded. In fact, a *Shvetāmbara* text, the *Kalpa Sūtra*, says that in the time of Mahāvīra 1,400 women but only 700 men attained liberation.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, according to *Shvetāmbara* tradition, Mallī, the nineteenth *Tīrthankara*, was a woman, and Marudevī, the mother of Ṛishabha (the first *Tīrthankara*), was the first to reach liberation.

The difference between the two viewpoints lies in the question of nudity. Taking and following the mendicant vows (*mahāvratas*) are deemed essential for the attainment of liberation; and these vows, include a vow of non-possession (*aparigraha*), which *Digambaras* interpret to mean the adoption of complete nudity, since the desire to wear clothing is understood as a sign of shame and the presence of sexual desire. But since women are not permitted to practise complete nudity, therefore, according to the belief, they are unable to attain liberation. *Shvetāmbaras* say that the clothing worn by monks and

nuns is one of the basic essentials required to support the mendicant way of life, and that this is no barrier to the attainment of liberation.

Nonetheless, both schools do believe that the biology of the female body makes it inferior to that of a man. It is said (incorrectly, according to modern research) that a woman is subject to constant sexual desire, and that she must cover her body to protect herself from the lustful glances of men. On the other hand, it is believed that women are not subject to the lowest levels of depravity to which men can fall, which means that they do not go down to the lowest of the seven hells (*naraka*). *Digambaras* believe that this also precludes them from ascending to *siddhaloka*, which lies beyond the highest heaven and where liberated souls have their dwelling after death, since they say that those who cannot go to the lowest hell cannot ascend beyond the heavens.<sup>2</sup>

See also: **moksha**.

1. *Kalpa Sūtra* 5, *SBE22* p.268.

2. For many of the details, see “*strī-mokṣa*,” *A to Z of Jainism*, *AZJW*.

**sù** (C) *Lit.* raw silk; metaphorically, white, plain, unadorned; simple, quiet; essence, nature; naivety, innocence; purity; in Daoism, a person’s original state of being prior to being conditioned by materiality; a term also used for vegetarian food.

*Sù* is used in a manner similar to *pú* (uncut jade) and *pǔ* (uncarved block). The three terms appear in the *Dàodé jīng*, which emphasizes the importance of returning to one’s original nature, to the innocence and simplicity that existed before the elaborate makeup of human conditioning and artificiality was applied. The *Dàodé jīng* offers advice to anyone wishing to realize the *Dào*. The eight characters in the last four lines of this verse (*jiànsù bàopǔ shǎosī guǎyù*) summarize Daoist teachings:<sup>1</sup>

People have need of what they can depend upon:  
 reveal your simple self (*jiànsù*),  
 embrace your original nature (*bàopǔ*),  
 check your selfishness (*shǎosī*),  
 curtail your desires (*guǎyù*).

*Dàodé jīng* 19; cf. *WLT* pp.119–20

Daoists see things in nature as existing and behaving with natural simplicity, their original *dé* (character, virtue) being simplicity itself. Human beings, on the other hand, due to their capacity to make sophisticated choices, wander far from their original *dé*, which causes suffering of one kind or another. The Daoist adept, fully embodying his original *dé*, lives in complete innocence and simplicity; his *dé* is characterized by self-arising naturalness and spontaneity.

After the death of his master Wáng Zhé, master Liú Chǔxuán (C12th) went to live in Luòjīng (present-day Luòyáng). An account of his life in *Records of the Orthodox Sect of the Golden Lotus* describes his ascetic practices while living in obscurity as an ordinary civilian – practices that eventually led to his becoming a master:

The teacher (Liú Chǔxuán) hid his traces in Luòjīng and refined his nature (*liànxìng*) in the midst of the intermingling of the dust. He nurtured his simplicity (*sù*) amidst the clamour of the shops and the market place. (Sounds of) wind and string instruments did not disturb his inner harmony. Beautiful sights did not arouse his vital essence (*jīng*). His mind was like ashes and, because of this, he regarded coldness as a benefit. His body was like a tree, and therefore he did not act in lewd ways. If people gave him food, he would eat. But if not, he showed no trace of resentment. If someone asked him something, he would answer with hand gestures.

*Qín Zhǎn, Jīnlián zhèngzōng jì, DZ173 4:5a; cf. in TPEQ p.50*

According to the *Zhuāngzǐ*, retaining purity and simplicity implies “being present with the spirit (*shén*)”:

The *dào* (way) of purity (*chún*) and simplicity (*sù*) lies solely in being present with the spirit (*shǒushén*). Be present (*shǒu*) with it and never let it go, and you will become one with the spirit (*shén*). When the essence (*jīng*) of the all-pervading One is constantly present with the spirit, then the spirit is merged with its original nature (*tiānlún*). . . . Simplicity (*sù*) implies unmixed; purity (*chún*) implies an unimpaired spirit. He who embodies purity (*chún*) and simplicity (*sù*) can be called a true man (*zhēnrén*).

*Zhuāngzǐ 15*

See also: **chún** (►4), **pǔ**, **zìrán**.

1. Lin Yutang, *Wisdom of Laotse*, WLT p.120.

**subhānī** (A/P) *Lit.* glory (*subhān*) to me (*ī*)!; glory be to me!; an expression attributed to the Sufi ecstatic, Abū Yazīd al-Bisṭāmī, derived from the common Muslim expressions, “*Subhānahu* (glory to Him)” and “*Subhāna ʾllāhi* (praise be to God, glory to God)!”; the term *subhān* usually being reserved for references to God.

Sufis have debated Bisṭāmī’s meaning. While some have seen heresy in his words, others such as al-Sarrāj have pointed out that it is impossible to know what meaning Bisṭāmī had in mind. It is unlikely that he was quoting

any sacred text since there is no such expression in the *Qurʾān* or *ḥadīth* (traditional sayings and stories associated with the Prophet). It is more likely that he was giving expression to his inner state of consciousness while in ecstasy, as in the *ḥadīth* in which God ‘says’: “When I love my servant, . . . I become the hearing with which he hears, the seeing with which he sees, . . . and the tongue with which he speaks.”<sup>1</sup> In other words, Bisṭāmī had lost all sense of personal individuality in his identification and intoxication with the Divine.

Al-Ghazālī, one of the greatest systematic theologians of Islam, explains that Bisṭāmī’s cry of “*Subḥānī!*” and al-Ḥallāj’s exclamation, “*Anā al-Ḥaqq* (I am God)!” are only the natural expressions that come from every individual who has undergone the rigours of annihilation of the self (*fanā*) to arrive at *baqā*’ (subsistence in God):

These gnostics (*ʿarīfūn*), on their return from their ascent into the heaven of Reality (*Ḥaqīqah*), confess with one voice that they saw nought existent there save the One Real. Some of these arrived at this scientifically, and others experimentally and subjectively. From these last, the plurality of things fell away in its entirety. They were drowned in the absolute Oneness, and their intelligences were lost in Its abyss. Therein they became as dumbfounded things. No capacity remained with them save to recall *Allāh*; not even the capacity to recall their own selves. So there remained nothing with them save *Allāh*. They became drunken with a drunkenness wherein the sway of their own intelligence disappeared; so that one exclaimed, “I am God (*anā al-Ḥaqq*)!” and another, “Glory be to me (*subḥānī*)!” – “How great is my glory!”, and another, “Within this robe is nought but *Allāh*!” . . . . But the words of lovers, passionate in their intoxication and ecstasy, must be hidden away and not spoken of. . . .

Now, when this state prevails, it is called in relation to Him who experiences it, extinction (*fanā*), nay, extinction of extinction (*fanā’ al-fanā*), for the soul has become extinct to itself, extinct to its own extinction (*fanā*). For it becomes unconscious of itself and unconscious of its own unconsciousness, since were it conscious of its own unconsciousness, it would be conscious of itself. In relation to the man, immersed in this state, the state is called, in the language of metaphor, ‘identity (*ittiḥād*)’; in the language of reality, ‘unification (*tawḥīd*)’.

*Al-Ghazālī, Mishkāt al-Anwār, MAG pp.56–57; cf. FSC (1:6) pp.106–8*

See also: **aham Brahmasmi** (5.1), **anā al-Ḥaqq, so’ham** (4.1), **tasbīḥ** (8.4), **Tat tvam asi** (5.1).

1. Cf. *Ḥadīth Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* 8:76.509, HSB; AMBF 42, in EIM p.226.

**sukh(a)** (S/Pa/H/Pu), **bde ba** (T), **lè** (C), **raku** (J) *Lit.* pleasure, happiness, delight, joy, bliss; comfort, solace, ease, well-being, contentment, rest; peace, tranquility; said by Sanskrit grammarians to be derived from *su* (good, easy, well) + axle hole (*kha*), thus ‘running easily’, ‘fitting well’; more likely to be derived from *su* (good, easy, well) + *stha* (standing), thus ‘standing easily’; a term often contrasted with its opposite *duḥkha* (suffering, hardship). The term is used for both the pleasure and happiness of this world (as in *kāma-sukha*, sensual pleasure), as well as the peace, happiness, and bliss of meditation.

According to Jain descriptions, the soul possesses infinite knowledge (*ananta-jñāna*), infinite vision (*ananta-darshana*), infinite bliss (*ananta-sukha*), and infinite energy (*ananta-vīrya*).

This pursuit of *sukha* or worldly happiness and pleasure is recognized in *Vedānta* as the goal of human activity. It is also understood that unalloyed happiness comes only when the individual soul merges with the Universal Soul. This union is called *ānanda*, translated as undiluted ‘bliss’ or ‘joy’.

Understanding *sukha* as the highest pleasure or bliss, the *Bhagavad Gītā* says:

That *yogī* who enjoys inner happiness (*sukha*),  
 who knows inner delight (*ārāma*),  
 and who likewise experiences the inner light –  
 He realizes himself to be *Brahman*,  
 and knows the beatitude (*nīrvāṇa*) of *Brahman*.

*Bhagavad Gītā* 5:24

In Buddhism, as a general term, *sukha* is used for both the illusory happiness of this world, which is really suffering, as well as the bliss of any internal stage, including that of *nibbāna*. As a technical term, *sukha* is one of the mental factors (*cetasikas*) in the sensation or perception group of materio-mental aggregates (*vedanā-khandhas*). As *sukhindriya*, it is one of the *indriyas* (faculties), and refers to pleasurable bodily feeling, rather than the mental bliss of a meditator. *Sukha* is also the fifth of the ten *vipassanūpakkilesas* (imperfections of insight), and the fourth of the five *jhānangas* (*jhāna* factors).

The *jhānangas* are aspects and states of mind that are worked through as the meditator progresses through the four *jhānas*, the *jhānas* being states of meditative absorption associated with *rūpaloka* (world of subtle forms, patterns, or archetypes). As the fourth *jhānanga*, *sukha* replaces the excitement of *pīti* (rapture) on entry to the third *jhāna*, and is finally replaced by *ekaggatā* (one-pointedness) as the meditator enters the fourth *jhāna*. According to the *Anguttara Nikāya*, “The fruit and reward of bliss (*sukha*) is concentration (*samādhi*)”, and, “For one who is filled with bliss (*sukha*),

right concentration (*sammā-samādhi*) has found a foundation.” *Samādhi*, here, is synonymous with *ekaggatā*.<sup>1</sup> The five *jhāna*ngas are regarded as the antidotes to the five *nīvaraṇas* (hindrances) to *jhāna*. They are: sensory desire (*kāmacchanda*), ill will (*vyāpāda*), sloth and torpor (*thīna-middha*), restlessness and anxiety (*uddhacca-kukkucca*), and wavering doubt or lack of conviction (*vicikicchā*). *Sukha* is regarded as the antidote to restlessness and anxiety (*uddhacca-kukkucca*).

The distinction between *pīti* and *sukha* in the Pali *suttas* is not always easy to discern. According to Buddhaghosa in his *Visuddhimagga*, “Where there is *pīti* there is *sukha*; but where there is *sukha* there is not necessarily *pīti*.”<sup>2</sup> He goes on to explain that *pīti* is delight in attaining the object, while *sukha* is enjoyment of the object acquired. *Pīti* is the delight of a tired and thirsty traveller who is told that shade and water lie just ahead. *Sukha* is his enjoyment of that shade and water.

*Sukha* is regarded as a *vipassanūpakilesa* (imperfection of insight) when it becomes a distraction and a place of spiritual stasis. The twentieth-century Thai teacher Ajahn Lee Dhammadharo explains that the feeling of “peace” and “a sense of physical and mental pleasure and ease” can induce the meditator to become engrossed in “a deep and arresting sense of relaxation, stillness, ease, or freedom from disturbance”. The result is an aversion to anything perceived as painful, “seeing pleasure as something good and pain as something bad”. “Pain is the same thing as pleasure,” he says. “When pleasure arises, pain is its shadow; when pain arises, pleasure is its shadow. As long as you don’t understand this, you give rise to a kind of defilement. . . . What has happened is that you’re simply stuck on a pleasing mental state.” The meditator has thus become absorbed in the duality of pleasure and pain.<sup>3</sup>

Though *sukha* is not the supreme goal, a person needs to be happy and in harmony with life in order to be able to meditate. In the sayings attributed to the Buddha in the *Dhammapada*, where *sukha* is used in a general sense for human happiness, the Buddha says that happiness in this world arises simply from kind and considerate behaviour:

Should a person do what is good,  
let him repeat it again and again;  
He should find pleasure in it,  
for the result of good conduct is happiness (*sukha*).

*Dhammapada* 9:3

To him who habitually honours and respects the aged,  
four blessings will accrue:  
Long life, beauty, strength, and happiness (*sukha*).

*Dhammapada* 8:10

He also gives an extended exhortation on the value of living happily:

Let us live with happiness (*sukha*),  
 without hatred among those who hate.  
 Among the hateful, let us dwell hate-free. . . .

Let us live with happiness (*sukha*),  
 free from care among the careworn;  
 Among the careworn, let us dwell carefree.

Let us live with happiness (*sukha*),  
 we who possess nothing;  
 Like the radiant gods, let us feed on joy (*pīti*).

Victory breeds hatred,  
 for the defeated dwell in suffering (*dukkha*).  
 He who has given up victory and defeat,  
 is calm and lives in happiness (*sukha*).

There is no fire like lust,  
 no ill like hatred;  
 There is no suffering (*dukkha*) like bodily existence,  
 no happiness (*sukha*) higher than peace.

Desire is the greatest disease,  
 (mental) fabrications (*sankhāras*) are the greatest ill (*dukkha*).  
 To him who truly understands this,  
*nibbāna* (*nirvāṇa*) is the highest happiness (*sukha*).

Health is the greatest gift,  
 contentment is the greatest wealth;  
 The trustworthy are the best relations,  
*nibbāna* (*nirvāṇa*) is the highest happiness (*sukha*).

*Dhammapada 15:1, 3–8*

The Buddha also says that a person who tries to achieve happiness in life at the expense of others who are also seeking happiness, will find no happiness after death:

He who, seeking his own happiness (*sukha*),  
 gives pain to other beings also desiring happiness (*sukha*),  
 obtains no happiness (*sukha*) after death.  
 He who, seeking his own happiness (*sukha*),  
 gives no pain to other beings also desiring happiness (*sukha*),  
 obtains happiness (*sukha*) after death.

*Dhammapada 10:3–4*

Happiness, he summarizes, is derived from following the spiritual path:

Happiness (*sukha*) is virtue lasting until old age;  
 Happiness (*sukha*) is unfaltering faith;  
 Happiness (*sukha*) is the attainment of wisdom;  
 Happiness (*sukha*) is doing no evil (*pāpa*).

*Dhammapada 23:14*

Understanding *sukha* to mean the false happiness of worldly existence, he says that a wise man remains unaffected by the vagaries of life:

The virtuous become detached from everything;  
 The saintly hold no converse with sensual pleasures;  
 The wise are not affected,  
 whether touched by happiness (*sukha*) or sorrow (*dukkha*).

*Dhammapada 6:8*

And, using the term for spiritual happiness, he says that one who follows the spiritual path with this attitude will find bliss (*sukha*):

A *bhikkhu* (monk) who is full of joy (*pāmojja*),  
 having full faith in the Buddha's teaching,  
 will reach a peaceful (*santa*) place,  
 the end of conditioned existence, and bliss (*sukha*).

*Dhammapada 25:22*

See also: **duḥkha** (6.2), **lè, sukha** (6.2).

1. *Anguttara Nikāya* 10:1 (*Kimatthiya Sutta*), 10:3 (*Paṭhamaupanisa Sutta*), *PTS*A5 pp.2, 4.
2. Buddhaghosa, *Visuddhimagga* 4:100, *PTS*V pp.145.
3. Ajahn Lee Dhammadharo, *Basic Themes*, *BTAD* pp.127–28.

**sukr** (A/P) *Lit.* intoxication, drunkenness; mystically, spiritual intoxication or ecstasy resulting from mystical experiences.

Some Sufis have held that sobriety (*ṣaḥw*) is a higher state than intoxication (*sukr*), since –for the spiritually immature – intoxication may lead to imbalance of mind. A notable proponent of this viewpoint was al-Junayd. They also say that stable mystic knowledge of higher states of consciousness is superior to a state of love and ecstasy over which the recipient has little or no control. Other Sufis, such as Abū Yazīd al-Bisṭāmī, have elevated intoxication above sobriety. Sufis such as Rūmī, however, have made no



such distinction, holding that true mystic knowledge and ecstatic love are ultimately inseparable aspects of the same inner reality.<sup>1</sup>

Hujwīrī presents the various viewpoints:

You must know that ‘intoxication (*sukr*)’ and ‘rapture’ are terms used by spiritual people to denote the rapture of love for God, while the term ‘sobriety (*ṣaḥw*)’ expresses the attainment of that which is desired. Some place the former above the latter, and some hold the latter to be superior. Abū Yazīd and his followers prefer intoxication (*sukr*) to sobriety (*ṣaḥw*). They say that sobriety (*ṣaḥw*) involves stability and the equilibrium of human attributes, which are the greatest veil between God and man, whereas intoxication (*sukr*) involves the destruction of human attributes such as foresight and choice, and the annihilation (*fanā*) of man’s self-control in God, so that only those faculties survive in him that do not belong to humankind; and they are the most complete and perfect. . . .

Junayd and his followers prefer sobriety (*ṣaḥw*) to intoxication (*sukr*). They say that intoxication (*sukr*) is bad, because it involves the disturbance of one’s normal state and the loss of sanity and self-control; and inasmuch as the principle of all things is sought either by way of annihilation (*fanā*) or subsistence (*baqā*), or of effacement (*maḥw*) or affirmation (*isbāt*), the principle of verification cannot be attained unless the seeker is sane. Blindness will never release anyone from the bondage and corruption of phenomena. The fact that people remain in phenomena and forget God is due to their not seeing things as they really are; for if they saw, they would escape. . . .

My *shaykh*, who followed the doctrine of Junayd, used to say that intoxication (*sukr*) is the playground of children, but sobriety (*ṣaḥw*) is the annihilation ground of men (*i.e.* the self). I say, in agreement with my *shaykh*, that the perfection of the state of the intoxicated one is sobriety (*ṣaḥw*).

*Hujwīrī, Kashf al-Maḥjūb XIV, KMM pp.230–32; cf. KM pp.184–86*

Rūmī says that *sukr* is a part of the spiritual journey. Just as imagination, thought and understanding are parts of the terrain in the journey through material life, so are mystical self-effacement (*maḥw*) and intoxication (*sukr*) and annihilation (*fanā*) of the self parts of the landscape of the spiritual journey. This mystical intoxication, he says, is not the same as sensual intoxication, which prevents the soul from enjoying the “cup” of spiritual “water”:

The journey of the dry body takes place on dry land:  
the journey of the spirit takes place in the heart of the sea.  
Since your life has passed in travelling on land –

now mountain, now river, now desert –  
 from where will you obtain the Water of Life (*Āb-i Ḥayvān*)?  
 How will you cleave the waves of the (spiritual) Sea?

The waves of earth are our imagination (*wahm*)  
 and understanding (*fahm*) and thought (*fikr*);  
 The waves of water are self-effacement (*maḥw*)  
 and intoxication (*sukr*) and annihilation (*fanā*).  
 While you are in the former intoxication (*sukr*),  
 you are far from the latter intoxication (*sukr*):  
 While you are drunk with this cup,  
 you are blind to that.

*Rūmī, Maṣnavī I:572–76; cf. MJR2 pp.33–34*

Some Sufis have distinguished various degrees of intoxication. Ni‘mat Allāh Valī speaks of *sukr-i ṭabī‘ī* (natural intoxication), arising from the consumption of “material drink”; *sukr-i ‘aqlī* (intellectual intoxication), which is the intoxication with “reason and proofs” of “one ruled by the intellect (‘*aql*)”; and *sukr-i ilāhī* (divine intoxication), the permanent ecstasy of the “perfected”.<sup>2</sup> In his dictionary of Sufi terms, Tahānawī describes the temporary witnessing of the divine Beauty (*sukr-i zā‘il*, transient intoxication), and that which is permanent (*sukr-i wāqī‘*, permanent intoxication).<sup>3</sup> Sufis have also used compound terms such as *sukr al-jam‘* (intoxication of union).

See also: **dhawq**, **rayy**, **ṣaḥw**, **shurb**, **sukr**.

1. *E.g. Rūmī, Maṣnavī II:1531–43; see also MJR7 p.294.*
2. Shāh Ni‘mat Allāh Valī, *Rasā‘il*, RNV2 p.161, in *SSE11* p.111.
3. Tahānawī, *Kashshāf Iṣṭilāḥāt al-Funūn*, KIFT2 p.357, in *SSE11* pp.111–12.

**sukūn** (A/P) *Lit.* stillness, quiescence, calmness; related to the verb *sakana* (to be still, to become still); the utter “stillness in the very oneness (*aḥadīyat*) of the Essence”;<sup>1</sup> also, the inner stillness arising from complete acceptance of the divine will.

Ibn al-‘Arabī points out that all existence is motion. This is the “first characteristic” of created things as they emanate from the Divine. Therefore, there can be no ultimate “rest” or “stillness” in created things:

All existence is perpetually in motion, in this world and the hereafter, since coming into being does not happen in stillness (*sukūn*). . . . Motion pervades existent things in the most complete manner. The first characteristic it has in everything other than God is that all things pass from the state of Nonexistence to the state of existence. There can

be no rest whatever in any existent thing, since rest is stillness (*sukūn*), and stillness (*sukūn*) is lack of motion.

*Ibn al-ʿArabī, Meccan Revelations 2:280.31, 2:629.28, FMIA3 (2:167) p.422, FMIA4 (4:285) p.387; cf. SPK p.102*

Stillness or calmness of the mind arises from the complete acceptance of the divine will. Then the ego-self is no longer passing comment or judgment on the events of life. This is a high spiritual stage:

Muḥāsibī says, “Contentment (*riḍā*) is the calmness (*sukūn*) of the heart whatever the events that flow from the divine decree.” This is sound doctrine, because the calmness (*sukūn*) and tranquillity of the heart are not qualities acquired by man, but are divine gifts.

*Hujwīrī, Kashf al-Maḥjūb XIV:1, KMM p.223; cf. KM p.180*

Shāh Dāʾī Shīrāzī puts it in human terms:

What does it mean to enjoy calm (*sukūn*)?  
To have peace of heart from good or ill.  
Abandon inward agitation,  
and cast desire for the world out of your heart.  
How long this vain bustling about?  
Seek peace of heart (*ārām-i dil*) from your God.

*Dāʾī Shīrāzī, Kullīyāt 1619–21, KSDS1 p.101, in SSE10 p.130*

1. Tahānawī, *Kashshāf Iṣṭilāḥāt al-Funūn*, KIFT2 p.421; cf. in SSE10 p.130.

**sunn samādhi** (H/Pu), **sunn samādh** (Pu) *Lit.* absorption (*samādhi*) in the void (*sunn*); specifically, the state of superconsciousness in the region of *sunn*, also called *pārbrahm* or *daswān dwār*; the stage immediately beyond that of the universal mind, where the soul first knows itself as pure soul; also, the state of absorption in God, without self-consciousness after becoming completely oblivious of the body and the outer world. Since *sunn* is commonly used as a term for any of the inner ‘skies’, *sunn samādh* has been used in a general way for absorption at any stage within. As Guru Amardās writes:

Their minds enter into *sunn samādh*,  
and their light (*jotī*) is absorbed into the Light (*Jot*).

*Guru Amardās, Ādi Granth 910, AGK*

*Sunn samādh* is also used to refer to the state of the Lord absorbed within Himself before creation and to the state of souls who have realized Him:

In the body-village, the most sublime place,  
 the supremely noble people dwell.  
 Above them is the immaculate Lord, the one universal Creator:  
 they are lovingly absorbed in (His) *sunṇ samādh*.

*Guru Nānak, Ādi Granth 1039, AGK*

See also: **sunṇ** (4.1).

**supernatural prayer** The third degree of prayer, deeper than vocal and mental prayer, according to Christian mystics; a general term for the various degrees of contemplation, including visions, raptures, revelations, and so on. In the descriptions of Teresa of Ávila, supernatural prayer begins with the prayer of quiet, in which the soul is deeply recollected, and the senses and intellect are either suspended or at rest.<sup>1</sup> It is described by Angela of Foligno:

Supernatural prayer is that during which the soul is so exalted by this knowledge, or meditation, or fullness of God that it is uplifted above its own nature and understands more of God than it otherwise could naturally. And understanding, it knows, but that which it knows it cannot explain, because all that it perceives and feels is above its own nature.

*Angela of Foligno, Book of Divine Consolation 2:20; cf. BDC p.100*

She also describes it as an experience of “great joy”, such that vocal prayers are no longer possible.<sup>2</sup>

See also: **mental prayer** (8.5), **prayer** (8.5), **vocal prayer** (8.5).

1. Teresa of Ávila, *Life* 22, *CWTAI* p.137.

2. Angela of Foligno, *Book of Divine Consolation* 20, *BDC* p.101.

**sushupta, sushupta avasthā, sushupti, sushupti avasthā** (S/H) *Lit.* state (*avasthā*) of deep sleep (*sushupti*); sound sleep; dreamless sleep without any interference of thought, experienced when the attention sinks to the navel centre (*maṇipūra chakra*).

In the *Upanishads*,<sup>1</sup> *sushupti* is sometimes likened to the higher mystic consciousness, since both states are characterized by the absence of desire, as well as a complete unawareness of the sufferings and duality of material life. Some commentators have therefore equated deep sleep with consciousness of the Supreme. Others have tried to put the record straight. As the *Maṇḍala-Brahmaṇa* Upanishad says:

Though there is some correspondence between *sushupti* and *samādhi* (deep meditation), since in both the mind becomes absorbed, yet there is a vast difference between the two. In the former, since the mind seeks repose in *tamas* (darkness, inertia), it cannot be the means of liberation. But in *samādhi*, with the uprooting of *tamas*, the mind is raised up to the nature of the Indivisible. This is none other than the *Sākshī-Chaitanya* (Witness-Consciousness, the higher Self) in which the entire universe is absorbed, since the universe is only an illusion of the mind, and not different from it. Though the universe may appear to be outside the mind, nonetheless it is unreal.

*Maṇḍala-brāhmaṇa Upanishad 2:3; cf. TMU p.189, YU pp.233–34*

In *sushupti*, says Shankara, “The functions of the mind and all its organs are suspended.”<sup>2</sup> And he continues:

Profound sleep (*sushupti*) is the cessation of all kinds of perception, in which the mind remains in a subtle, seed-like form. The witness of this is the universal verdict, “I was not aware of anything at that time”.

*Shankara, Vivekachūḍāmaṇi 121; cf. VCSM p.4*

Even so, he adds that the Supreme Self (*Ātman*), the eternal consciousness within all things, is always aware of everything:

That which knows everything that happens in the waking state, in dream, and in profound sleep (*sushupti*); which is aware of the presence or absence of the mind and its functions; and which is the background to the notion of egoism – That is That. . .

That which clearly manifests Itself in the states of wakefulness, dream, and profound sleep (*sushupti*); . . . which witnesses the egoism, the *buddhi* (reason), *etc.*, which are the diverse forms and modifications (of the mind); and which makes Itself felt as absolute existence-knowledge-bliss; know this to be the *ātman*, your own self, within your heart.

*Shankara, Vivekachūḍāmaṇi 126, 217; cf. VCSM pp.46, 84*

See also: **avasthā, prajñā**.

1. *E.g. Māṇḍūkya Upanishad 5, 11.*
2. Shankara, *Vivekachūḍāmaṇi* 120; cf. VCSM p.44.

**suspension of the faculties** A state of rapture in which the senses and mental faculties, especially memory, imagination and intellectual or reasoned

understanding, are entirely suspended, while the soul enjoys a deep ecstasy and often experiences visions and revelations; a state of consciousness in which the soul and mind rise above the body and the mental faculties associated with physical and bodily existence.

St Teresa does her best to describe how the normal functioning of the memory and intellect are temporarily stilled and suspended. She refers to this state as a kind of “prayer”:

Whoever has experienced this prayer will know something of it; since what happens is so obscure, it cannot be expressed more clearly. I can only say that the soul feels close to God, and there dwells such certainty within it that it cannot do other than believe. In this prayer, all the faculties fail, and are suspended in such a way that it is impossible to believe that they are active. If it has been reading, it is unable to concentrate upon what it had been reading or to remember it; and the same is true if it had been praying. And so this bothersome little moth – the memory – gets its wings burnt, and can fly no longer. The will is fully occupied in loving, but it does not understand how it loves. The understanding, if it understands, does not understand how it understands.

*Teresa of Ávila, Life 18:14; cf. CWT1 p.163, CWT1 p.110*

She explains that in her experience, although the entire period passed in prayer may extend up to several hours, the actual suspension of the faculties is of more limited duration. But even when the faculties begin to function once again, they may be once again suspended. The “two faculties”, which she mentions elsewhere, are the memory and intellectual understanding, to which she adds imagination:

In the beginning, this prayer passes so quickly – at least it happens this way to me – that neither these exterior signs nor the failure of the senses are immediately noticeable. But the great abundance of the favours granted to the soul clearly inform it how bright has been the sun that has shone upon it, and has caused it to melt away.

It is noteworthy that, in my opinion, whatever the length of time in which the faculties of the soul are in this state of suspension, it is very short; were it to last for half an hour, that would be a long time. I do not think it has ever lasted that long with me. But since there is no sensory consciousness, it is really very difficult to estimate, so I will merely say that it is never very long before one of the faculties becomes active again. It is the will that holds the banner, while the other two faculties soon return to bother it once more. But since the will remains at rest, they are once again suspended, and then again they come back to life.

In this way, the time spent in prayer can last, and does last, for some hours. For once the two faculties have begun to get intoxicated with the divine wine, they are very ready to lose themselves again, so as to receive yet more; and so they keep company with the will, and all three rejoice together. But the stage in which they are completely suspended, and have no power to imagine anything – for, as I understand it, the imagination is also completely suspended – lasts only for a short while. Even so, the faculties do not completely recover, but remain bewildered, as it were, for several hours, while God – from time to time – gathers them to Himself once more.

*Teresa of Ávila, Life 18:12–13; cf. CWT1 p.162, CWT1 pp.109–10*

John of the Cross, who was familiar with St Teresa's descriptions and terminology, speaks in a similar manner, although he indicates, probably describing his own experience, that the period of suspension can be of extended duration:

Sometimes this oblivion of the memory and suspension of the imagination reach such a point ... that a long time passes without the soul's perceiving it, or knowing what has taken place during that period. And, as the imaginative faculty is then in suspension, it feels nothing that is done to it, not even things that cause pain; for without imagination there is no feeling, not even coming through thought, since this no longer exists.

*John of the Cross, Ascent of Mount Carmel 3:2.6; cf. CWJ1 p.214*

St John is saying that during contemplation, the contemplator may be unaware that he has entered a state in which his memory and imagination have been suspended – because it is those very faculties that would register their own activity. As the soul progresses, a higher awareness or consciousness comes into play, which is aware of the suspension of the lower mental faculties.

See also: **ecstasy, rapture, sleep of the faculties.**

**svapn(a) avasthā (S/H)** *Lit.* dream (*svapna*) state (*avasthā*), in which an individual's attention and connection with the body and senses, as well as the external world, ceases or is reduced; also called *svapna sthāna* and *taijasa* (luminous); also, metaphorically, the state of the soul in this world, which fails to see Reality, and lives, so to speak, in a state of illusion or dream. Many mystics have described this world as a projection of the mind.

In the dream state, the mind is active, but is independent of the sense organs and has limited or no consciousness of the gross body. In his *Tattva*

*Bodha*, the ninth-century mystic-philosopher Shankara explains that dreams arise from impressions formed in the waking state:

For the question as to what is *svapna avasthā*, the explanation is this: the world that is projected while in sleep from the impressions born of what has been seen or heard in the waking state (*jāgrat avasthā*) is called dream (*svapna*).

*Shankara, Tattvabodha 4:2, TBS p.32*

See also: **avasthā**, **svapna** (6.2), **taijasa**.

**sweetness** Spiritually, a metaphor describing the supreme bliss or joy of contact with the Divine. Though commonly resulting from spiritual practice or prayer, such sweetness is generally regarded as the grace of God, since it appears spontaneously, and cannot be experienced at will; a metaphor used in the attempt to convey the subtlety, sublimity and beauty of true spirituality, as well as the ineffable and blissful experience of mystic transport and mystic understanding; mentioned in the writings of practically all mystics, including biblical texts.

A number of psalms speak of the sweetness of contact with the Divine. Psalm 90 exhorts the reader to live continuously in the inner bliss and sweetness of the divine presence:

Let us wake in the morning filled with Your love  
and sing and be happy all our days. . . .  
May the sweetness of the Lord be on us!

*Psalms 90:14, 17, JB*

Psalm 27 speaks not only of the protection and sweetness afforded by God to those who take Him as their fortress, but the writer also begs to see Him face to face:

One thing I ask of *Yahweh*,  
one thing I seek:  
To live in the house of *Yahweh*  
all the days of my life,  
To enjoy the sweetness of *Yahweh*  
and to consult Him in His temple (within).

*Psalms 27:4, JB*

The biblical *Song of Songs* also makes a great many references to the sweetness of the beloved and of the loving soul. There are several places where the lover or bride, often speaking in metaphors, expresses the sweetness of love:



His fruit is sweet to my taste. . . .

Show me your face,  
let me hear your voice;  
For your voice is sweet  
and your face is beautiful. . . .

Awake, north wind,  
come, wind of the south!  
Breathe over my garden,  
to spread its sweet smell around.  
Let my beloved come into his garden,  
let him taste its rarest fruits. . . .

His cheeks are beds of spices,  
banks sweetly scented.  
His lips are lilies,  
distilling pure myrrh. . . .

His conversation is sweetness itself,  
he is altogether lovable.

*Song of Songs 2:1, 14, 4:16, 5:13, 16, JB*

Many Christian mystics have similarly spoken of the sweetness of divine love, experienced in mystic prayer:

It comes to pass that, being all day engaged in work, he gives himself to prayer for an hour, and the inward man is rapt in prayer and plunged in great sweetness into the unfathomable depth of that other world, so that his whole mind is up aloft, rapt away thither, and estranged from things below. For the time being, forgetfulness comes upon him with regard to the interests of his earthly mind, because his thoughts are filled and taken captive by divine and heavenly things, by things infinite and past comprehension, by wonderful things that no human lips can express, so that for that one hour he prays and says, "Would God that my soul might pass over with my prayer!"

*Macarian Homilies 8:1; cf. FSHM p.81, SHME p.65*

The author of the *Cloud of Unknowing* speaks throughout of God's "sweetness and love".<sup>1</sup> He explains how the darkness of the inner cloud of unknowing prevents the soul "from experiencing His loving sweetness".<sup>2</sup> And he maintains that the contemplative experiences a foretaste of heaven. God, he advises the recipient of his treatise, "has set you in rich pasture to be fed with the sweet food of His love, a foretaste of your inheritance in the kingdom of heaven".<sup>3</sup>

Indeed, he believes that anyone who seeks to align himself to His will can expect to feel something of the divine sweetness:

If any man were so refashioned by the grace of God that he heeded every impulse of His will, . . . he would never be without some sense of the eternal sweetness, even in this life, nor be without its full realization in the bliss of heaven.

*Cloud of Unknowing 4; cf. CUCW p.63, CUEU p.67*

Richard Rolle's *Fire of Love* is similarly punctuated by frequent references to the sweetness of the Divine. By turns, he describes this inner sweetness as "honeyed",<sup>4</sup> "wonderful",<sup>5</sup> "desirable", "delightful" and "angelic",<sup>6</sup> "heavenly" and "ineffable",<sup>7</sup> "infinite" and "eternal",<sup>8</sup> and "everlasting".<sup>9</sup> He speaks of the "sweetness of divine love beyond description",<sup>10</sup> of "exceptional" and "abundant sweetness",<sup>11</sup> of taking "delight in the sweetness of devotion".<sup>12</sup> He writes of the "sweetness with which God delights his lovers"<sup>13</sup> and the "sweetness of heavenly joy".<sup>14</sup> He adds, however, that such sweetness may not be a constant experience:

It is clear to lovers that no one attains the heights of devotion or is ravished by the sweetness of contemplation all at once. In fact, it is only occasionally, and then only for a moment, that they are granted the experience of heavenly things; only little by little do they at last gain spiritual strength.

*Richard Rolle, Fire of Love 2; cf. FLML (1:2) p.19, FLRR p.51*

This "unspeakable sweetness",<sup>15</sup> he says, is discovered by the contemplative in inner prayer. "Great delight and spiritual sweetness," he says, "lead him on to the contemplation of heavenly things, purging from his mind the hunger for worldly comfort."<sup>16</sup> Himself a solitary, Rolle says that solitaries "delight in the sweetness of prayer", and enjoy the "sweetness of heavenly refreshment".<sup>17</sup>

He refers to the biblical psalmist as a "typical contemplative, . . . one who is feeding on heavenly sweetness",<sup>18</sup> paraphrasing "my cup overflows" of the twenty-third psalm<sup>19</sup> as "a draught of inner sweetness, intoxicating my soul with love for my Maker, so that I rest secure, the love of passing things completely put behind me".<sup>20</sup>

Touched by this "sweetness of heaven", the soul longs only for more:

The soul, anointed with the sweetness of heaven and breathing its soft air, longs to set out heavenward, and feels irked that she must remain in this mortal flesh. Nonetheless, she gladly endures whatever adversity comes her way, for she is resting sweetly in the joy of eternal love.

*Richard Rolle, Fire of Love 36; cf. FLML (2:6) p.155, FLRR p.160*

And “when the time comes” for the true “seekers” of God, “those who are filled with love and joy”, “to leave this irksome, sick world, without a shadow of doubt they are borne up to God”:<sup>21</sup>

And it is all because they were completely absorbed in supreme love, an indescribable love that blazed within their souls. With such sweetness and devotion did they love God that they knew nothing within themselves but spiritual heat, heavenly song, and divine sweetness.

*Richard Rolle, Fire of Love 5; cf. FLML (1:5) p.30, FLRR p.60*

Rolle also writes at length concerning the “inner sweetness” of a divine song and music that he hears within. It is

the sweetness of unheard melody; sound that cannot be known or heard save by him who receives it, and who himself must be purified and detached from earthly things.

*Richard Rolle, Fire of Love 15; cf. FLML (1:15) p.71, FLRR p.93*

And again:

Very sweet indeed is the stillness that the spirit experiences when sweet, divine music comes down and brings it joy. Then the mind is rapt in sublime and joyful melody, and sings the delights of everlasting love. . . . A man overflows with inner joy, and his very thought sings as he rejoices in the burning of love. . . . Once a man has known some such experience, he is never thereafter entirely without it, for there always remains some kind of glow or song or sweetness, even if they are not all present together in the same degree.

*Richard Rolle, Fire of Love 11; cf. FLML pp.52–53, FLRR pp.76–77*

Walter Hilton, Richard of St Victor, Margery Kempe, Julian of Norwich, John of the Cross, Teresa of Ávila, and practically every other mystic – Christian and otherwise – who has described mystical experience, has spoken in a very similar manner concerning the sweetness of divine love, for it is a characteristic of the mystic way. As Hadewijch observes, “sweetness is experienced by the imperfect man as well as by him who is perfect”.<sup>22</sup> Bernard of Clairvaux speaks of the “unutterable sweetness of the Word”.<sup>23</sup> Francis of Assisi writes:

I am inebriated with so much sweetness. . .  
I am dying of sweetness, do not marvel at it.

*Francis of Assisi, Canticle of Love, of the Furnace, WFA pp.128, 120*

Brother Lawrence says:

There is not in the world a kind of life more sweet and delightful than that of a continual conversation with God: those only can comprehend it who practise and experience it.

*Brother Lawrence, Practice of the Presence of God, Letters 5, PPGL pp.39–40*

And Jan van Ruysbroek writes, quoting a biblical psalm:

The rivers of the grace of God pour forth, and the more we taste of them, the more we long to taste. And the more we long to taste, the more deeply we press into contact with Him. And the more deeply we press into contact with God, the more the flood of His sweetness flows through us and over us; and the more we are thus drenched and flooded, the better we feel and know that the sweetness of God is incomprehensible and unfathomable. And therefore the prophet says: “Oh, taste and see that the Lord is sweet.”<sup>24</sup> But he does not say how sweet He is, for God’s sweetness is without measure. . . . And this is also testified by the bride of God in the *Song of Songs*, where she says: “I sat down under his shadow, with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.”<sup>25</sup>

*Jan van Ruysbroek, Sparkling Stone 10, SSJR pp.211–12*

Nor is the experience exclusive to past centuries when mysticism was an integral part of Christianity. Nancy Mayorga, a twentieth-century Californian and follower of Swami Prabhavananda, writes of the same experience:

Sometimes His presence comes with such a quiet and tender sweetness that I find myself weeping with gratitude. . . . When you surrender to that absolute stillness, that all-pervasive beneficent light, that inexpressibly sweet, sweet bliss, there is no doubt, no doubt at all, in your heart or in your mind, that you are experiencing God.

*Nancy Mayorga, Hunger of the Soul, HSDM pp.71, 123*

The biblical psalms and *Song of Songs* are commonly quoted and alluded to by Christian, Jewish, and other mystics. One of the Manichaeian psalms accords the highest sweetness to the Word of Truth, which is equated with the Name of God:

Taste and know that the Lord is sweet.  
Christ is the Word of Truth:  
he that hears it shall live.

I tasted a sweet taste,  
I found nothing sweeter than the Word of Truth.

I tasted a sweet taste,  
 I found nothing sweeter than the Name of God.  
 I tasted a sweet taste,  
 I found nothing sweeter than Christ.

*Manichaean Psalm Book, MPB p.158*

Another psalm, written in the name of the Word and master, speaks of the sweetness dispensed by a master of the divine Word when he comes to this world:

I am in everything, I bear up the heavens:  
 I am the Foundation, I support all universes,  
 I am the Light that shines forth, that gives joy to souls.  
 I am the Life of the world: I am the Sap in all trees;  
 I am the sweet Water that supports the sons of matter.

*Manichaean Psalm Book CCXLVI; cf. MPB p.54*

Here, the “trees” probably refer to the “Five Trees” or realms brought into being and sustained by the creative power of the Word, and mentioned in gnostic literature.<sup>26</sup>

Among the gnostics, the erudite writer of the Nag Hammadi *Tripartite Tractate* also speaks fondly of the sweetness of the Father:

Not only is He the one called ‘without a beginning’ and ‘without an end’, because He is unbegotten and immortal; but just as He has no beginning and no end as He is, He is unattainable in His greatness, inscrutable in His wisdom, incomprehensible in His power, and unfathomable in His sweetness. . . .

He transcends all wisdom and is above all intellect, and is above all glory, and is above all beauty, and all sweetness, and all greatness, and any depth, and any height. . . .

If this One, who is unknowable in His nature, to whom pertain all the greatnesses which I have already mentioned, if out of the abundance of His sweetness He wishes to grant knowledge so that He might be known, He has the ability to do so. He has His Power, which is His Will. . . .

The one whom He raised up as a light for those who came from Himself (the aeons), the one from whom they take their name, he is the Son, who is full, whole and faultless. . . . He (God) becomes manifest, so that He may be hymned because of the abundance of His sweetness.

*Tripartite Tractate 52–53, 55, 62–63; cf. NHS22 pp.194–95, 198–99, 210–13*

God, he says, is beyond all finite and describable experiences. He is unknowable, yet He can make Himself known through “His Will” – “His

Power”, His Word. Through His “Son”, the Word and master, He makes Himself known, so that the game of love may be played “because of the abundance of His sweetness”. He plays the game of love with those He makes His devotees. He worships Himself through them.

Echoing a well-known passage from the *Wisdom of Jesus ben Sirach*, where Wisdom (as the creative power) describes remembrance of herself as “sweeter than honey”,<sup>27</sup> the writer of the early Christian *Odes of Solomon* speaks similarly of the Living Water of the divine Word:

Sweeter by far than honey are its waters,  
and the honeycomb of bees cannot be compared with it;  
Because it flows forth from the lips of the Lord,  
and from the heart of the Lord is its Name.

*Odes of Solomon 30:4–5, OSD p.134*

See also: **Amṛita** (3.1).

1. E.g. *Cloud of Unknowing* 7, CUCW p.68.
2. *Cloud of Unknowing* 3, CUCW p.62.
3. *Cloud of Unknowing* 2, CUCW p.60.
4. Richard Rolle, *Fire of Love* 27, FLRR p.128.
5. Richard Rolle, *Fire of Love* 37, FLRR p.168.
6. Richard Rolle, *Fire of Love* 40, FLRR pp.180, 183.
7. Richard Rolle, *Fire of Love* 25, FLRR pp.120–21.
8. Richard Rolle, *Fire of Love* 34, FLRR p.151.
9. Richard Rolle, *Fire of Love* 37, FLRR p.167.
10. Richard Rolle, *Fire of Love* 9, FLRR p.73.
11. Richard Rolle, *Fire of Love* 19, FLRR pp.105–6.
12. Richard Rolle, *Fire of Love* 4, FLRR p.57.
13. Richard Rolle, *Fire of Love* 1, FLRR p.48.
14. Richard Rolle, *Fire of Love* 38, FLRR p.172.
15. Richard Rolle, *Fire of Love* 14, FLRR p.90.
16. Richard Rolle, *Fire of Love* 36; cf. FLRR p.159.
17. Richard Rolle, *Fire of Love* 13, FLRR p.83.
18. Richard Rolle, *Fire of Love* 2, FLRR p.52.
19. *Psalms* 23:5.
20. Richard Rolle, *Fire of Love* 36, FLRR pp.160–61.
21. Richard Rolle, *Fire of Love* 5, FLRR pp.59–60.
22. Hadewijch, *Letter* 10, HCW p.67.
23. Bernard of Clairvaux, *On the Song of Songs* 85:13, WBC4 p.209.
24. *Psalms* 34:8.
25. *Song of Songs* 2:3–4, JB.

26. E.g. *Gospel of Thomas* 36:19, NHS20 pp.60–61; *Second Book of Jeu* 119:50, BC pp.166–67; *Manichaean Psalm Book*, MPB p.181.  
 27. *Wisdom of Jesus ben Sirach* 24:20.

**tādī** (Pa) *Lit.* that one, such, of such quality; an adjective indicating the essentially indescribable state of an *arahanta* (noble one, enlightened one) or *buddha*, implying, “he is ‘such’.”

*Tādī* refers to the inner stability of an *arahanta* who has attained the goal of freedom from attachment to the world; who is no longer subject to birth and death; who has gone beyond likes and dislikes, pleasure and pain, gain and loss, fame and infamy, praise and blame; and who has neither aversion from or attachment to any person or any thing. He is inwardly stable because he has been able to still his mind, and is no longer assailed by negative feelings or emotions. Consequently, he is also stable outwardly, being unperturbed by events and circumstances, whatever they may be.

The term appears in a number of Pali texts. One who has attained true mystical insight or gnosis, and who has overcome the “fetter” of returning to rebirth (“becoming”) – he is “such (*tādī*)”:

For a disciple (*sekha*) in training on the straight path:  
 first, the knowledge (*ñāṇa*) of ending –  
 then, immediately, gnosis (*aññā*);  
 Then, with the ending of the fetter ‘becoming’ –  
 there’s the knowledge,  
 the gnosis of one released who is ‘such (*tādī*)’.  
 One consummate in these faculties,  
 peaceful, enjoying the peaceful state,  
 bears his last body, having conquered *Māra* (Death),  
 along with his mount (an elephant).

*Itivuttaka* 3:13, PTSI p.53; cf. *KNTB*

He is also a truly wise man:

Exalted in mind and heedful:  
 a sage trained in sagacity’s ways.  
 He has no sorrows – one who is ‘such (*tādī*)’,  
 calmed and ever mindful.

*Theragāthā* 1:68, PTST p.10, *KNTB*

He remains at peace, even when subjected to abuse (*akkosa*):

How can anger arise in one who is angerless,  
 in the tamed one of righteous living,  
 in one liberated by perfect knowledge,  
 in one who is ‘such (*tādī*)’, who abides in peace?

*Samyutta Nikāya* 7:2, *Akkosa Sutta*, PTSS1 p.162; cf. CDBB p.256

The Buddha is frequently asked in Buddhist texts how an enlightened and omniscient being lives as a human being among other human beings when he (or she) knows everything – including the contents of everybody’s minds as well as everything that has happened, is happening, and is going to happen. But since it is not a subject that is readily amenable to intellectual understanding or verbal description, a satisfactory answer to the question is never provided.

In the *Anguttara Nikāya*, the Buddha characteristically answers the question in an oblique and intellectually confusing manner. He says that he “directly knows” everything in the cosmos, but adds that it “has been realized by the Tathāgata, but in the Tathāgata it has not been established.” He “directly knows” because he is a part of everything. He has “realized” it, but it is not “established” because he knows things not as static memories or ‘items’ of knowledge, but as part of the universal oneness of all things. The Buddha then adds that he neither knows, nor does he not know, nor does he even recognize a knower (as separate from what is known). He is as he is – “such (*tādī*)”:

The Tathāgata – being ever the same among things seen, heard, sensed, and cognized – is ‘such (*tādī*)’. And I tell you, there is no other ‘such (*tādī*)’ higher or more sublime. . . . I know, I see – that is just how it is! – the Tathāgata clings to nothing.

*Anguttara Nikāya* 4:24, *Kālakārāma Sutta*, PTSA2 p.25; cf. ANTB, NDBB pp.412–13

**tafakkur** (A/P) *Lit.* consideration, reflection, reasoning, thinking, cogitation; contemplation, meditation; etymologically related to *fikr*, from *fakara* (to ponder, to consider, to reflect, to contemplate, to meditate). The verb form is used in the *Qur’ān*, which says that for those who reflect, the entire creation is a sign of the greatness and presence of God. Whether the intended meaning is cogitation or spiritual meditation is open to interpretation. Sufis have understood the passages both ways:

It is He who spread out the earth,  
 and set thereon mountains standing firm, and flowing rivers:  
 And fruit of every kind He made in pairs, two and two;  
 And He draws the night as a veil over the day.  
 Behold, truly in these things there are signs  
 for those who consider (*yatafakkarūn*).

*Qur’ān* 13:3; cf. AYA



Among His signs is this,  
 that He created for you mates from among yourselves,  
 that you may dwell in tranquillity with them.  
 And He has put love and mercy between you:  
 truly in that are signs for those who reflect (*yatafakkarūn*).

*Qur'ān 30:21; cf. AYA*

Indeed, the *Qur'ān* says that God actually sends signs or “similitudes” and forceful demonstrations down to earth in order to cause men to reflect:

Had We sent down this *Qur'ān* on a mountain,  
 truly, you would have seen it humble itself  
 and cleave asunder for fear of *Allāh*.  
 Such are the similitudes which We propound to men,  
 that they may reflect (*yatafakkarū*).

*Qur'ān 59:21; cf. AYA*

The *Qur'ān* also asks of human beings, “Do they not reflect (*yatafakkarū*) in their own minds?”<sup>1</sup> and, “Can the blind be held equal to the seeing? Will you then not consider (*tatafakkarū*)?”<sup>2</sup>

Sufis have understood *tafakkur* as both reflection in the sense of thinking or consideration, and contemplation or meditation in the sense of spiritual perception in the absence of thought. Rūzbihān sees *tafakkur* as mystical perception. He describes *tafakkur* as the faculty of perception in the angelic realm (*‘ālam al-malakūt*), also called the realm of God’s Acts (*‘ālam al-Afāl*), which lies below the realm of His Attributes (*‘ālam al-Ṣifāt*) and immediately above the physical world:

Whenever the mystic’s heart – in the course of seeking the lights of the Attributes (*anwār al-Ṣifāt*) – finds itself in the valleys of the Acts (*awdiyah al-Afāl*), God manifests to it through every goodness from the light of His grace, and through every evil from the mystery of the magnificence of His wrath.

This is contemplation (*tafakkur*), which moves around the spirit (*rūḥ*) in the angelic realm (*‘ālam al-malakūt*). According to the *Qur'ān*: “And contemplate (*tafakkur*) the creation of the heavens and the earth.”<sup>3</sup>

Contemplation (*tafakkur*) is the basis of worship, for it is worship of the heart (*qalb*), its virtue and its location. The Prophet said, “An hour’s contemplation (*tafakkur*) is better than seventy years of worship.”<sup>4</sup>

Dhū al-Nūn said, “Whoever devotes his heart (*qalb*) to contemplation (*tafakkur*) comes to perceive the Unseen (*al-Ghayb*).”

Al-‘Ārif (the gnostic, al-Ḥallāj) said: “Contemplation (*tafakkur*) is the roaming of hearts (*qulūb*) among the Unseen (*Ghayūb*).”

*Rūzbihān, Mashrab al-Arwāḥ 8:4, MARB p.150; cf. in SSE9 pp.31–32*

Shabistarī treats *tafakkur* as meaning both rational thinking and spiritual perception. It is a means of developing an understanding of God. In *Gulshan-i Rāz*, Shabistarī, after first declaring that all phenomenal existence is unreal (God being the sole and absolute Reality), poses certain questions and provides his own answers. And the very first question and its answer relate to the nature of thought (*fikr*) and thinking (*tafakkur*):

Q. First of all I am perplexed about my own thought (*fikr*);  
What is that which they call thinking (*tafakkur*)?

A. You ask, “Tell me what is ‘thinking (*tafakkur*)’,  
since I am perplexed as to what it is.”  
Thinking (*tafakkur*) is passing from the false to the Truth,  
and seeing the Absolute Whole in the part.  
*Shabistarī, Gulshan-i Rāz 70–72, GRS p.36; cf. GRSS (71–73) p.7*

Lāhijī, in his well-known commentary on the poem, explains that in Sufi terminology, *tafakkur* represents the seeker’s progress on the journey of spiritual revelation – from phenomenal multiplicity, which is illusory, to absolute Oneness, which alone is True. The ultimate experience of this journey is when the seeker reaches the stage of *fanā’fi Allāh* (total immersion in God). His sense of a separate identity is annihilated, as is that of everything else in creation. After that, he attains the stage of *baqā’* (permanence, immortality), in which he sees every created thing as a manifestation of the divine Truth.<sup>5</sup>

This is *tafakkur* in the terminology of the mystics who have experienced gnosis and revelation. Philosophers and theologians, on the other hand, who rely on argument and discursive reason, understand *tafakkur* differently. Shabistarī goes on to describe the *tafakkur* of the theologians and logicians:

When a conception (*taṣavvur*) is formed in the mind,  
it is first of all named ‘reminiscence (*taẓakkur*)’.  
And when you pass on from this in thinking (*fikr*),  
the learned call it ‘interpretation (*‘abrat*)’.  
When conceptions (*taṣavvur*) are properly arranged in the mind,  
the result with logicians is known as ‘thinking (*tafakkur*)’.  
From proper arrangement of known conceptions (*taṣavvur ḥā*)  
the unknown proposition becomes known.  
The major premise is a father, the minor a mother,  
and the conclusion a son, O brother!

But to learn of what kind this arrangement is,  
reference must be made to books of logic.  
Moreover, unless divine guidance aids it,  
logic is truly a mere bondage of forms.

That road is long and hard, so leave it:  
 like Moses, for a season cast away that staff.  
 Come for a season into the valley of peace (*vādī-yi ayman*),  
 hear with faith the call, “Truly, I am God.”  
 He that knows the Truth, and to whom Unity is revealed,  
 sees at first glance the light of very Being.  
 Nay more, he sees by the illumination of that pure Light:  
 he sees God first in everything he sees.

*Shabistārī, Gulshan-i Rāz 74–84, GRS pp.36–37; cf. GRSS (75–85) pp.7–8*

According to philosophers and intellectuals, when a conception or idea (*taṣawwur*) is formed in the mind (*dil*, i.e. *nafs-i nāṭiqah*, the rational or thinking soul, in the terminology of this group), it is called ‘reminiscence (*taẓakkur*)’. From reminiscence one proceeds to explanations and propositions. All major premises, or first principles, are gained by intuition, or reminiscence of ideas known to the mind in a former state and now forgotten owing to inattention and neglect. The proper arrangement of such conceptions (*taṣawwur*), they call ‘thinking (*tafakkur*)’. But such *tafakkur* or discursive thinking cannot enable logicians to transcend the illusion of phenomena and apprehend God, the Truth (*al-Ḥaqq*). For that, one has (like Moses) to discard the prop or “staff” of logic and argument, and step into the valley of peace (*vādī-yi ayman*), the spiritual heart, and experience mystic illumination.

Shabistārī makes it clear that it is spiritual illumination, not logical demonstration, that leads to knowledge of God. Logic is of little avail without inner illumination. Elaborating further on the nature of “good meditation (*fikr*)”, he says that it is characterized by “abstraction (*tajrīd*)”, which implies the shedding of all passions and mental activity, and emerging from all the limitations of self veiling the real essence of the soul:

Abstraction (*tajrīd*) is a condition of good meditation (*fikr*),  
 for then the lightning of divine guidance illumines us.  
 To him whom God guides not in the path,  
 it will not be disclosed by use of logic.  
 Since the philosopher is bewildered,  
 he sees in things nothing but the chance event;  
 From the event, he seeks to prove the cause,  
 therefore is he bewildered as to the nature of the cause. . . .  
 Fool that he is! For he seeks the blazing sun  
 by the dim light of a torch in the desert.

*Shabistārī, Gulshan-i Rāz 85–88, 94, GRS pp.37–38;*

*cf. GRSS (86–89, 95) pp.8–9*

To Jurjānī, *tafakkur* is the discriminative faculty that permits the seeker of God to distinguish between what will be helpful to him in his quest and what will not:

Consideration (*tafakkur*) is the heart's (*qalb*) handling of the spiritual realities for the sake of perceiving the Sought One. It is the lamp by which the heart distinguishes between what is good and what is bad for it – for what is in its interest and what is to its detriment. A heart not involved in consideration (*tafakkur*) steps forth in darkness.

Consideration (*tafakkur*) means invoking the mysteries of things that lie in the heart; the purifying of the heart by means of infused blessings entering therein; a lamp to guide one away from the transitory and a key to open the way to escape from self-will.

*Jurjānī, Ta'rīfāt, KTJ p.62; cf. in SSE9 pp.30–31*

Ni'mat Allāh Valī describes *tafakkur* as a faculty that develops along with the spiritual evolution of the seeker:

In the early stages, consideration (*tafakkur*) means insight through perception based on need, while in the final ones it means being transported from gnosis to realization, from form to spiritual Reality, and from creation to God.

*Shāh Ni'mat Allāh Valī, Rasā'il, RNV4 pp.170–71, in SSE9 p.31*

See also: **dhikr** (8.5), **fikr**.

1. *Qur'ān* 30:8, AYA.
2. *Qur'ān* 6:50; cf. AYA.
3. *Qur'ān* 3:191.
4. Cf. *Ḥadīth*, in *Kashf al-Maḥjūb*, KMM p.135, KM p.108.
5. Lāhijī, *Sharḥ-i Gulshan-i Rāz*, SGR pp.50–51.

**taḥqīq** (A/P) *Lit.* investigation, ascertaining the truth, verification, realization, acknowledging as true, believing; truth, fact, reality, certainty; related to *ḥaq* (truth, reality) and *taḥaqquq* (making sure, being true, ascertainment; proving something to be truth, fact, reality, or certainty); in Sufism, verification or realization of the truth of acquired knowledge through mystic experience, as in the terms, *'ilm al-taḥqīqī* (realized knowledge) and *ahl al-taḥqīq* (people of realization), meaning souls who have attained mystic realization; commonly contrasted with *taqlīd* (blind acceptance of authority), which – in a mystical context – implies theoretical knowledge of mysticism based on someone else's experience. It is also said that the Sufi advances from the stage of bondage (*taqyīd*) to that of absolute liberty (*iṭlāq*) and realization (*taḥqīq*).

Rūzbihān says that *taḥqīq* stems from mystical experience:

Realization (*taḥqīq*) is said to originate from the evidence of mystical perceptions that have become established in the heart.

*Rūzbihān, Sharḥ-i Shaḥīyāt 397:1084, CPS p.559; cf. in SSE12 p.53*

Both al-Qāshānī and Shāh Ni‘mat Allāh Valī place *taḥqīq* at an advanced stage on the mystic path:

Realization (*taḥqīq*) involves contemplation (*shuhūd*) of God (*Ḥaqq*) in the forms of His Names, that is to say, as the worlds (*akwān*) and the essences (*a‘yān*). Thus, the one who verifies is neither veiled from God (*Ḥaqq*) by the creation, nor from the creation by God (*Ḥaqq*).

*Al-Qāshānī, Iṣṭilāḥāt al-Ṣūfiyah 485, GSTA p.155; cf. GST p.107*

The station of realization (*taḥqīq*) is attained only when God has become the eyes, ears, hands and feet of the potential realizer, such that he acts in God (*Ḥaqq*) through God (*Ḥaqq*), carrying out God’s (*Ḥaqq*) intentions.

*Shāh Ni‘mat Allāh Valī, Rasā’il, RNV4 p.269; cf. in SSE12 p.54*

The Sufi poets, Sa‘dī and Ḥāfiẓ, both write in a more general manner:

In the exhibition hall of form (this world),  
abandon the pleasures of the *nafs* (lower mind),  
so that you be blessed of heart  
in the realm of realization (*taḥqīq*).

*Sa‘dī, Kullīyāt (Khvātīm), KSSS p.398; cf. in SSE12 p.55*

You who would learn the sign of love  
from the textbook of the intellect,  
you have no idea how to learn  
this subject by means of realization (*taḥqīq*).

*Ḥāfiẓ, Dīvān, DHA p.38, DIH p.91; cf. DHWC (66:6) p.161*

See also: **taqlīd**.

**taijasa** (S/H) *Lit.* consisting of light; luminous, radiant, bright, brilliant, shining; metallic; in *Vedānta*, subtle essence; also, the dream state of consciousness. The soul or self (*ātman*), incarnate in a human form, experiences four modes of consciousness: the waking state (*jāgrat avasthā*, *vishva*, or *vaishvānara*); the dream state (*taijasa* or *svapna avasthā*); the state of dreamless sleep (*sushupti avasthā*); and the state of transcendental consciousness (*turīya avasthā*).

In *sushupti avasthā*, the mode of consciousness that experiences the undifferentiated state of dreamless sleep is called *prājñā* (wisdom-like, not to be confused with *prajñā*, which is transcendental wisdom or gnosis). In deep and dreamless sleep, a person is unaware of both the external and internal worlds, and the darkness of ignorance envelops the consciousness. He is described in the *Māṇḍūkya Upanishad* as a “mass of consciousness (*prajñā-naghanah*)”. Though he is free from an awareness of duality and multiplicity, he has no awareness or knowledge of anything. “As in a dark night all cows appear black and cannot be distinguished from one another, so in deep sleep all discriminative knowledge disappears.”<sup>1</sup>

*Vishva* (universal, universe) is that which experiences the gross material world; *taijasa* experiences the subtle, astral world; *prajñā* experiences the causal world of unmanifest archetypal mind patterns; *turiya avasthā* (fourth state) is the pure consciousness of *Brahman* from which the other three states arise. In human experience, the first three are reflected as waking, dreaming, and deep sleep.

In Jain philosophy, the *taijasa-sharīra* (body of light) is a body comprised of *prāṇa* or vital energy.

See also: **avasthā**, **svapna avasthā**.

1. Swami Nikhilananda, on *Māṇḍūkya Upanishad* 5, U2 p.229.

**tāixiān** (C) *Lit.* immortal (*xiān*) embryo (*tāi*). See **xiāntāi**.

**tajallī** (A/P) (pl. *tajalliyāt*) *Lit.* a shining forth; theophany, divine manifestation, appearance, effulgence, illumination, revelation, or flash of light; a manifestation of divine glory; an experience of inner light; mystic enlightenment, not necessarily of God, but of any degree, inside.

*Tajallī* is one of a number of Sufi terms used for God’s communication with human beings including *waḥy* (revelation), *kashf* (unveiling), and *ilhām* (inspiration). But while *kashf* suggests some effort on the part of the recipient, *tajallī* is bestowed by the grace of God, although the sincerity and receptivity of the recipient are not discounted. Also, *tajallī* may be given to anybody, while *waḥy* is generally reserved for prophets, *ilhām* for non-prophets and *kashf* for either. Again, *waḥy*, *kashf* and *ilhām* imply the communication of some knowledge, such as the hidden workings of the universe. *Tajallī*, on the other hand, conveys a deep sense of the brilliance, glory and majesty of the Divine without necessarily imparting anything else.<sup>1</sup>

*Tajallī* implies the emergence of something previously hidden, like the sun at dawn. The term evokes light as the main aspect of divine manifestation.

Thus, Rūmī portrays “union with God” as the “*tajallī* of the moon”<sup>2</sup> and the time of Muḥammad as the “dawn of *tajallī*”.<sup>3</sup> To God, *tajallī* is His manifestation of Himself; to the mystic it is an illumination of consciousness whereby he perceives something of the immensity of the Divine and His workings in creation. The term is often translated as ‘theophany’, which means a visible but not necessarily material manifestation of the Divine. It is in this sense that it appears in verb form in the *Qur’ān*, in a retelling of the story of Moses’ encounter with God on Mount Sinai:

When Moses came to the place appointed by us, and his Lord addressed him, he said: “O my Lord! Show Yourself to me, that I may look upon You.”

*Allāh* said: “By no means can you see Me (direct); but look at the mountain – if it abide in its place, then you will see Me.”

When his Lord manifested (*tajallá*) His glory on the mountain, He made it as dust, and Moses fell down in a swoon. When he recovered his senses he said: “Glory be to You! To You I turn in repentance, and I am the first to believe.”

*Qur’ān* 7:143; cf. *AYA*

Here, Sinai is lit up and crumbles with the power of the divine *tajallī*. The term is similarly found in the opening invocation to *sūrah* 92:

By the night as it conceals (the light),  
by the day as it appears (*tajallá*) in glory. . . .

*Qur’ān* 92:1–2, *AYA*

The first theophany of the Divine is that plane of consciousness at which, in Qūnawī’s terminology, “He manifested Himself to Himself in theophany (*tajallá bi-dhātihi li-dhātihi*)”<sup>4</sup> before the creation was manifested as outward existence. It is called *Tajallī-yi Ghaybī* (Unseen Theophany) or *Tajallī-yi Avval* (First Theophany). It is also known as *al-Ta’ayyun al-Awwal* (First Entification) or *al-Fayḍ al-Aqdas* (Most Holy Emanation). From here is manifest the Visible Theophany (*Tajallī-yi Shāhidī*), also called *Tajallī-yi Šānī* (Second Theophany), the Second Entification (*al-Ta’ayyun al-Thānī*) or *al-Fayḍ al-Muqaddas* (Holy Effusion), within which all created things exist in potential or archetypal form, and from which all the created worlds have come into and are sustained in being. The entire creation is thus, in effect, a continuous *tajallī* or theophany of God, ever changing and never repeating itself. In this context, ‘entification (*ta’ayyun*)’ is the process of bringing something into existence; it is also that which has been brought into existence.

Referring to the First Theophany in which God begins the process of revealing His love to Himself, Ḥāfiẓ writes:

In pre-eternity a ray of Your beauty  
 dawned in theophany (*tajallī*);  
 Love appeared and set  
 the whole world afire.

*Ḥāfiẓ, Dīvān, DHA p.69, DIH p.153, in SSE7 p.40*

To the mystic, *tajallī* implies the first experiences of inner light. *Tajalliyāt*, often translated as ‘flashes of light’, imply powerful but momentary experiences of light that sweep the seeker up into a temporary state (*ḥāl*) of ecstasy. The inner light itself does not flash; it is perfectly steady, but the seeker cannot stand the brilliance; he can only stay in its presence for a moment. Thus, *tajalliyāt* are often portrayed as momentary unveilings of the divine Beauty. It is also said that such *tajalliyāt* are not only brief, fleeting and overpowering, but that they never manifest in the same way twice. Hence, the well-known Sufi saying, much favoured by Ibn al-‘Arabī, “*Tajallī* never repeats itself (*lā takarrur fī al-tajallī*),” which is true of both the divine manifestation of the entire creation, as well as the individual experiences of *tajallī*.<sup>5</sup>

A number of Sufis have defined *tajallī* from the mystic’s viewpoint:

Theophany (*tajallī*) is God’s responding light upon the hearts of the responsive.

*Rūzbihān, Sharḥ-i Shaḥīyāt 498:1237, CPS p.617, in SSE7 p.40*

*Tajallī* is the blessed effect of divine illumination on the hearts of the blessed, whereby they are made capable of seeing God within their hearts.

*Hujwīrī, Kashf al-Maḥjūb XXIV, KMM p.504; cf. KM p.389*

In *ṣūfī* terminology, theophany (*tajallī*) is that which appears to the eye of the heart from the Unseen. Theophanies (*tajalliyāt*) from God are infinite, each one conferring an awareness that engenders spiritual tasting.

*Javād Nūrbakhsh, Sufi Symbolism, FNI7 pp.40–41, SSE7 pp.39–40*

Theophany (*tajallī*) is like lightning that renders the lover helpless by its brilliance and permeates his soul. At this time, He is hidden, while the theophany is apparent. Theophany (*tajallī*) comes suddenly, but only to the heart that is aware. The greater one’s awareness in the first place, the greater the effect that theophany (*tajallī*) has upon one.

In order to experience theophany (*tajallī*), one must already be inflamed by one’s own findings so that one may be burned away by finding God. When a consumed one meets another consumed one, there is immediate companionship, but when he meets an inflamed one, the latter burns more intensely. Not every candle wax is suitable for this fire; not everyone can perceive such a lover.



The fault-ridden *nafs* cannot be presented in the presence of manifestation (*tajallī*) of the beauty (*jamāl*) of the Beloved (*Maḥbūb*); this is only for the soul that is rightly guided by the Sought One. . . . A single particle of this luminous beauty fills the entire sublime horizon with its sparks, and promises paradise.

*Anṣārī, Majmū'ah-i Rasā'il, RAAA1 p.364; cf. in SSE7 pp.39–40*

Since the entire creation is a divine theophany, the mystic can experience the Divine at any level. Sufis therefore speak of *tajallī-yi Āsārī* (theophany of His Works), implying the seeing of God in material things. There is likewise the theophany of His Acts (*Afāl*) and of His Attributes (*Ṣifāt*), referring to stages on the inner ascent until the soul experiences the theophany of His Essence (*tajallī-yi Ḍātī*):

Theophany of the Essence (*tajallī-yi Ḍātī*) is where the wayfarer becomes absolutely annihilated, so that individual knowledge, awareness and perception disappear. The foregoing theophanies (*tajallīyāt*) vary according to the purity (*ṣafā*) and the moments (*awqāt*) of theophanic display. If one sees God as a manifestation of oneself, this is perfect theophany (*tajallī*). Then again, if one actually becomes the manifestation of God, that is, experiences oneself as God, that is more complete, more perfect still.

*Lāhijī, Sharḥ-i Gulshan-i Rāz, SGR p.151, in SSE7 p.46*

In fact, Sufis write of experiencing divine manifestations (*tajallīyāt*) at all levels of the creation:

Theophany (*tajallī*) is said to be the appearance of God in any form, nature or attribute, be it through manifestations of higher beings and spiritual stations or be it through lower manifestations and projections in sensible form.

*Mir'āt-i 'Ushshāq, in TAT p.183, in SSE7 p.42*

See also: **jalwah**.

1. See John Renard, *All the King's Falcons*, AKF pp.30–31.
2. Rūmī, *Maṣnavī* I:1464, MJR2 p.81.
3. Rūmī, *Maṣnavī* II:356–58; cf. MJR2 p.240.
4. Qūnawī, *Taḥrīr al-Bayān*, in DF p.11.
5. Ibn al-'Arabī, *Meccan Revelations* 3:282.21, FMIA5 (4:360) pp.416–17, SPK p.104.

**taku wakan** (Lakota) *Lit.* sacred (*wakan*) mystery (*taku*); something powerful, sacred, or holy; anything mysterious or sacred; hence, the immanent spirit

within all things; the gods or spirits who control things; a powerful, spiritual event; a religious, spiritual, or mystical experience. *Taku wakan* can be applied to any thing or any experience, particular or general – a rock, an animal or bird, the spirit of a place, a weather deity, the spiritual energy in something, and so forth.

D.C. Irvington (*b.* 1945), an American with a long-term interest in Native American culture, describes an experience in which he desired momentarily to fly with an eagle:

Let me tell you a story from my own experience. It could be called *taku wakan*. I was lying in tall grass in the French Pyrenees and noticed an eagle soaring high above. The thought crossed my mind that I would like to fly with that eagle – and then I was. It was that simple. I was flying with this mountain eagle, seeing the earth from that height. The proof of my excursion out of the body, and more importantly, onto the eagle body, was that I could see the curvature of the earth from his soaring altitude. I could see the entire mountain range.

It was an awesome, exhilarating moment – then I looked straight down to where my body was lying. My body was a dot on a verdant landscape, and I was soaring 2,000 feet above. A pang of fear shot through me. In an instant, I had re-entered my body and the event was over – or so I thought. Did I imagine all that? Had I really been flying? I needed to stand up and feel my body moving – feel that I was still the occupant of this old house of feet and arms.

So I began walking up the grassy slope, away from where I had been lying. I was trying to get a sense of what had just happened. I was about ten steps from my resting place when I felt the eagle's energy. The raptor was diving out of the sky at tremendous speed. I looked up in time to see its outstretched talons and one large black eye that was demanding to know: who was this human and what right did he have to bother him without asking first. Swoosh. It passed less than ten feet above my head – a conservative estimate. The eagle meant business. Lesson number one: approach with humility and ask first.

*D.C. Irvington, Eagle Visions, EVTG*

Out-of-the-body experiences such as this are best understood as an expansion of consciousness or awareness into a more universal state. The subject does not in fact leave the body, but is experiencing some aspect of the world from a broader perspective, which gives the impression of separateness from the body.

See also: **out-of-the-body experience**.

**talwīn** (A/P) *Lit.* to colour; hence, alternation, variation, fluctuation, change, diversification, transformation, variegation, changing colouration; in Sufism, the changing succession of spiritual states experienced by the wayfarer as he evolves towards the stability (*tamkīn*) of union with the Divine; sometimes twinned with *takwīn* (becoming); commonly contrasted with *tamkīn* or *tamakkun* (stability, fixity, firm establishment).

Sufis speak of those who are traversing the path from stage to stage, experiencing various states (*aḥwāl*, sg. *ḥāl*) of mind and consciousness, and those who are firmly established at the highest mystical station (*maqām*), no longer subject to fluctuating states. The former, whose inner condition changes constantly, are subject to *talwīn*, the latter have attained *tamkīn*. Even the ecstatic, who experiences ecstasy when the negative tendencies of his lower mind (*nafs*) are in abeyance but loses it when they are active again, is subject to *talwīn*. The positive aspect of *talwīn* is that such transformation is essential for the spiritually evolving soul, who keeps moving slowly upward.

Rūzbihān provides a traditional definition of *talwīn*:

The mystic whose spirit is traversing the lights of the Attributes, advancing from the vision of one Attribute to that of another ... is in the state of fluctuation (*talwīn*), journeying from station (*maqām*) to station and from state (*ḥāl*) to state. When one is overcome by the characteristics of material humanity at one moment and loses them the next, and is disturbed while in the state of intoxication (*sukr*) and tranquil in that of sobriety (*ṣaḥw*), one is, thus, in fluctuation (*mutalawwīn*).

*Rūzbihān, Mashrab al-Arwāḥ* 8:29, MARB p.158; cf. in SSE12 pp.17–18

In a short essay on the nature of *tamkīn* and *talwīn*, al-Qushayrī first observes that *talwīn* remains characteristic of the wayfarer until he has reached the goal:

Fluctuation (*talwīn*) is an attribute of the lords of the states (*arbāb al-aḥwāl*). Stability (*tamkīn*) is an attribute of the people of realities (*ahl al-ḥaqā'iq*). As long as the servant is on the path, he is a possessor of fluctuation (*talwīn*) because he is still rising from state to state, changing from one attribute to another, leaving one rest stop, arriving at a meadow-pasture. Only when he arrives does he attain stability (*tamakkun*).

*Al-Qushayrī, Risālah* 3:14–17, RQQQ p.44; cf. in EIM p.135

Al-Qushayrī also adds that as the wayfarer rises from state to state, he attains a measure of stability (*tamkīn*) at each level. Upon final union with the Divine, the attributes of stability and fluctuation are annihilated.<sup>1</sup>

Rūmī observes simply that to be free of “change (*talwīn*)” is to be free of “time (*sāʿat*)”:

All change (*talwīn*) arises from time (*sāʿat*):

he that is free from time is free from change (*talwīn*).

When for a time (*sāʿat*), you escape from time (*sāʿat*),

‘how and why’ remain no longer:

You become familiar with that which has no ‘how’ or ‘why’.

*Rūmī, Maṣnavī III:2074–75; cf. MJR4 p.116*

See also: **sāʿah** (5.2), **tamkīn**.

1. Al-Qushayrī, *Risālah*, RQQQ pp.44–45; cf. in *EIM* pp.135–37.

**tamkīn** (A/P) *Lit.* stability, constancy, fixity, rest, firm establishment, firm rootedness, composure; implies being established firmly, as a king is established in majesty and dignity on a throne; in Sufism, the station of union with the Divine, beyond all changing states; hence such expressions as *maqām-i tamkīn* (station of stability), *ahl-i tamkīn* (people of stability), *etc.*; synonymous in Sufism with *tamakkun* (establishment).

Referring to the Quranic verse, “All things perish but His face,”<sup>1</sup> in the classification system of some Sufis, *tamkīn* is not the final goal. There still remains the annihilation of stability (*iṣṭilām pas az tamkīn*) or the annihilation of annihilation (*fanāʾ al-fanāʾ*), when all sense even of complete oneness vanishes.<sup>2</sup>

Sufis speak of those who are traversing the path from stage to stage, experiencing various states (*aḥwāl*, sg. *ḥāl*) of mind and consciousness, and those who are firmly established at the highest mystical station (*maqām*), no longer subject to fluctuating states. The former, whose inner condition changes constantly, are subject to *talwīn*, the latter have attained *tamkīn*.

Jurjānī provides a standard definition:

Stability (*tamkīn*) is the station of foundation and establishment in constancy. While the devotee is traversing the path, he is subject to fluctuation (*talwīn*), ascending from state to state, constantly changing characteristics. When he arrives, becoming united to God, he acquires stability (*tamkīn*).

*Jurjānī, Taʾrīfāt, KTJ pp.64–65; cf. in SSE12 p.19*

Tahānawī says much the same:

He who enjoys gnosis of the Essence has attained stability (*tamkīn*).

*Tahānawī, Kashshāf Iṣṭilāḥāt al-Funūn, KIFT3 p.263; cf. in SSE9 p.141*

Hujwīrī expands on the same basic idea:

*Tamkīn* denotes the residence of spiritual adepts in the abode of perfection and in the highest grade. Those in stations (*maqāmāt*) can pass on from their stations, but it is impossible to pass beyond the grade of *tamkīn*, because station (*maqām*) is the grade of the beginners, whereas *tamkīn* is the resting place of adepts, and *maqāmāt* (stations) are stages on the way, whereas *tamkīn* is repose within the shrine. . . .

One of the *shaykhs* says: “*Tamkīn* is the removal of *talwīn*.” *Talwīn* . . . is closely connected with *maqām*. The signification of *talwīn* is change and turning from one state to another, and the above mentioned saying means that he who is steadfast (*mutamakkin*) is not vacillating (*mutaraddid*), for he has carried all that belongs to him into the presence of God and has erased every thought of anything other than God from his mind, so that no act that passes over him alters his outward predicament and no state changes his inward predicament.

Hujwīrī, *Kashf al-Maḥjūb* XXIV, KMM pp.485–86; cf. KM pp.371–72

Most Sufis regard *tamkīn* as unequivocally higher than *talwīn*. Ibn al-‘Arabī, however, considers that the highest goal of union with God is actually one of “stability in fluctuation (*tamkīn fī al-talwīn*)”, because the actual nature of things is a continuous self-transformation of the Divine in the multiplicity of forms.<sup>3</sup>

Hāfiẓ uses the term in a more general manner, not necessarily implying the highest goal. Here, he is extolling the virtue of poverty:

O God, confer upon me the fortune of poverty:  
for this bestowal would bring me honour and stability (*tamkīn*).

Hāfiẓ, *Dīvān*, DHA p.29, DIH p.77; cf. DHWC (41:5) p.107, in SSE12 p.20

See also: **talwīn**.

1. *Qur’ān* 28:88.
2. E.g. Rūzbihān, *Mashrab al-Arwāḥ* 16:10, MARB p.269; cf. in SSE12 p.105.
3. Ibn al-‘Arabī, *Meccan Revelations* 2:532.30, FMIA4 (3:233) p.242; cf. SPK p.108.

**tandrā** (S/H) *Lit.* drowsiness, sleepiness; lassitude, sloth; half sleep, half concentration; a state often experienced while struggling with meditation, especially those forms where the attempt is made to hold the attention at the centre between the two eyebrows (eye centre, *ājñā chakra*, *bhruvoḥ-madhye*, etc.). Since the mind has a habitual tendency to slip down, as soon as the thought currents begin to

focus behind the eyes, the attention drops to the throat or lower centres and the individual falls asleep. The condition of *tandrā* is one of deep relaxation and is often blissful – for as long as the attention remains at the eye centre. However, there is always the possibility that the practitioner will fall completely asleep.

See also: **nidrā, sleep in meditation** (8.5).

**taqlīd** (A/P) *Lit.* imitation, copying; unquestioning adoption of concepts and ideas, uncritical faith in a source's authoritativeness; blind and inflexible adherence to custom and precedent; unquestioning acceptance of authority; thus, bondage, imitation, and hence also, *'ilm taqlīdī* (imitative knowledge); a major subject of debate in schools of Islamic religious law; from the same root as *qilādah* (necklace, collar), implying an authority that is followed by taking the words and deeds of another like a necklace or collar around the neck; commonly contrasted in a theological context with *ijtihād*, which implies personal effort to understand religious law, and in a Sufi context with *taḥqīq*, personal mystic realization:

Imitative knowledge (*'ilm-i taqlīdī*) is said to be that which is acquired through the imitation of others, such as the exoteric sciences, the sciences of jurisprudence, the principles of religion, the commandments of the *Sharī'at* (Islamic religious law) philosophy, and so forth.

*Ṣādiq Gawharīn, Farhang-i Lughāt va Ta'bīrāt-i Maṣnavī,*

*FLTM6 p.341, in SSE9 p.132*

Ibn al-ʿArabī points out that a seeker should only follow the authority of God – “come to know God through God” – since even the authority of one's own reason and reflection is liable to err:

Reason is full of meddling because reflection governs over it, along with all the faculties within man, since there is nothing greater than reason in following authority (*taqlīd*). Reason imagines it has God-given proofs, but it only has proofs given by reflection. Reflection's proofs let it take reason wherever it wants, while reason is like a blind man. No, it is even blinder in the path of God. The folk of *Allāh* do not follow the authority (*taqlīd*) of their reflections, since a created thing should not follow the authority of another created thing. Hence they incline toward following God's authority (*taqlīd*). They come to know God through God, and He is as He says about Himself, not as meddling reason judges.

How is it proper for an intelligent man to follow the authority (*taqlīd*) of the reflective faculty, when he divides reflective

consideration into correct and corrupt? Necessarily, he has need for a criterion (*fāriq*) with which to separate the correct from the corrupt, but he cannot possibly distinguish between correct and corrupt reflective consideration through reflective consideration itself. Necessarily, he has need for God in that.

*Ibn al-ʿArabī, Meccan Revelations 2:290.14, FMIA3 (2:172) p.436, SPK pp.166–67*

He also points out that, to begin with, a seeker takes the authority of others as the basis for his belief. Ultimately, however, this *taqlīd* is replaced by *taḥqīq*, personal inner realization of the truth of his beliefs.<sup>1</sup>

Rūmī describes the knowledge gained by *taqlīd* as *ʿilm-i taqlīdī* (imitative knowledge), which he does not hold in high esteem:

Imitative knowledge (*ʿilm-i taqlīdī*) is only for self-advertisement:  
when it finds a purchaser, it glows with delight.

*Rūmī, Maṣnavī II:3265; cf. MJR2 p.391*

He writes that such knowledge is learnt only to gain the “esteem” of others, and cannot exist in the absence of human vanity:

Knowledge (*ʿilm*) is imitative (*taqlīdī*) and acquired (*taʿlīmī*):  
its owner laments when a hearer is averse to hearing it.  
Since it is learned as a bait for esteem,  
not for the sake of spiritual enlightenment,  
the seeker of religious knowledge (*ʿilm*) is just as bad  
as the seeker of vile worldly knowledge (*ʿilm-i dunyā-yi danī*).  
He is seeking knowledge (*ʿilm*)  
on account of the vulgar and the noble,  
not in order that he may win release from this world.

Like a mouse, he has burrowed in every direction, since the light  
drove him from the entrance to his hole, saying “Away!”  
Inasmuch as he had no exit to the open country and the light,  
he continued to exert himself even in that darkness.  
If God gave him wings, the wings of wisdom,  
he would escape from mousiness and would fly like the birds;  
But if he seek not wings, he will remain underground  
with no hope of traversing the path to *Simāk* (the name of a star).  
Word-based knowledge (*ʿilm-i guftār*), which is soulless,  
is eager for the countenance of customers;  
But though it is robust at the time of disputation,  
it is dead and gone when it has no customer.

*Rūmī, Maṣnavī II:2429–37; cf. MJR2 p.347*

See also: ‘ilm al-**taḥqīqī**, **taḥqīq**.

1. Ibn al-‘Arabī, *Meccan Revelations* 1:271.27, *FMIAI* (1:50) p.410, *SPK* p.168.

**ṭarab** (A/P) *Lit.* joy, mirth, delight, rapture, pleasure; enjoyable feelings or emotions; entertainment with music and the like; in Sufism, inner pleasure, spiritual joy, and bliss. It is the joy of contact with the Divine:

By *ṭarab* is meant intimacy with God, and joy of heart therein.

*‘Irāqī, Iṣṭilāḥāt, RLRI p.81, in SSE1 p.179*

It arises as the result of “contemplation”:

For the lover, there are many causes for joy (*ṭarab*), the foremost of which is his sincerity in the contemplation of (the divine) Beauty. As the lover becomes intimate with God, the radiation of the divine Attributes from his face testifies to his proximity to God. Joy (*ṭarab*) is then born within the lover through contemplation (*mushāhadah*), until he reaches such a degree that he longs to fly off in the sheer joy (*ṭarab*) and exhilaration that he has realized through the attainment of union after separation.

God declares: “Let them rejoice in the bounty of God and His mercy, for the mercy of God is better than the (wealth) they hoard.”<sup>1</sup>

*Rūzbihān, Mashrab al-Arwāḥ* 5:4, *MARB* p.98; cf. in *SSE1* p.179

Ibn al-‘Arabī writes of the constant joy and “delight” of the dwellers in paradise (“the garden”):

The folk of the garden dwell in a bliss that is renewed at each succeeding instant in all their senses, their meanings (*ma‘ānī*), and their divine revelations (*tajallī*); they are constantly in delight (*ṭarab*). Hence, their bliss is the greatest of blisses.

*Ibn al-‘Arabī, Meccan Revelations* 2:653.25, *FMIA4* (4:291) p.423; cf. *SPK* p.106

Speaking of an encounter with his master, whom he likens – using a common Sufi metaphor – to a tall and stately cypress, Ḥāfiẓ writes:

I burst open with joy (*ṭarab*),  
like a rosebud blossoming on a riverbank,  
when that upright-statured cypress reared up,  
towering above my head.

*Ḥāfiẓ, Dīvān, DHA* p.87, *DIH* p.171; cf. *DHWC* 172 (204:6) p.331

1. *Qur’ān* 10:58; cf. *AYA*.



**tāraṇa** (S), **tarāṇa** (Pa), **tarṇā** (Pu) *Lit.* floating, swimming, crossing; safe passage; metaphorically, overcoming, transcending; hence, salvation, deliverance, liberation; the liberation of the soul from birth and death. *Taraṇa* also appears in one of the *visuddhis* (Pa. purifications) of Buddhism – *kankhā-vitarāṇa-visuddhi* (purification of overcoming doubt).

Using verb forms from the same root, Guru Nānak explains:

The lotus flower floats untouched upon the surface of the water,  
and the duck swims through the stream;  
With one's consciousness (*surat*) focused on the Word (*Sabad*),  
one crosses (*tarī'ai*) over the terrifying world-ocean.

*Guru Nānak, Ādi Granth 938, AGK*

And likewise, Guru Amardās:

O my mind, remain always in the protection of the *satguru*'s sanctuary.  
Those people to whose hearts the Lord's Name seems sweet  
are carried across (*tarṇā*) the terrifying world-ocean  
by the *guru*'s Word (*Sabad*).

*Guru Amardās, Ādi Granth 1132, AGK*

**tarang(a)** (S/H/Pu) *Lit.* wave, billow, ripple, emotion; used metaphorically in a variety of ways: waves that pass through the mind; the mental currents of worldliness induced by exposure to the senses; waves of *saṃsāra*; waves of peace and bliss that engulf the mind of a spiritual practitioner; waves of compassion, and so on.

Shankara writes of the waves of the world, and the stillness of *Brahman*:

By means of a regulated mind (*manas*) and the purified intellect (*buddhi*), realize your own Self directly, while in the body. Identifying yourself with It, cross the boundless ocean of *saṃsāra*, whose waves (*taranga*) are birth and death, and firmly established in *Brahman* as your own essence, find blessedness.

*Shankara, Vivekachūḍāmaṇi 136; cf. VCSM pp.50–51*

That which is free from differentiation, which exists forever, which is still (*nishchala*), like an ocean without waves (*nistaranga*), the ever free, of indivisible form – you are that *Brahman*. Meditate on That in your mind.

*Shankara, Vivekachūḍāmaṇi 259; cf. VCSM p.101*

Ravidās uses the metaphor to point to his oneness with the Divine:

In fact, there is no great difference between you and me.  
 You and I are like gold and ornament, water and wave (*tarang*)!  
 You are the indwelling Master:  
     I am your servant and You are the Lord.  
 You are in everything and everything is in You:  
     Ravidās has no doubt about this at all.

*Ravidās, Vānī, Pad 29, RJKB p.15; cf. in SSI3 pp.162–63*

Swami Shiv Dayal Singh speaks of both mental waves and the wave of the divine Music that carries the soul to the divine beloved:

With the dawning of the *guru*'s love within,  
 the mental wave (*tarang*) subsides.  
*Swami Shiv Dayal Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 37:7.6, SBP p.314*

Trumpets are being played at the door of your beloved  
 with the intermittent melody of the divine lute.  
 I have revealed the secret to you, says *Rādhā Swāmī*,  
 now enter the wave (*tarang*) and ride along.  
*Swami Shiv Dayal Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 20:25.7–8, SBP p.168*

See also: **tāraṇa**.

**tatā-chinā** (AC) *Lit.* divine wisdom. See **kandire**.

**tatra-majjhataṭā** (Pa) *Lit.* there (*tatra*) in the middle (ness) (*majjhataṭā*); standing in the middle of all this, remaining in the middle of all things; in Pali Buddhist literature, equanimity, mental balance, impartiality, even-mindedness, neutrality, non-reactivity, disinterestedness, freedom from bias; characterized by the application of balance and impartiality in all mental activities, preventing either excess or deficiency; a term used in *Abhidhamma* literature (systematic analysis of the *suttas*); used synonymously with *upekkhā*. See **upekkhā**.

**tattvajñāna** (S), **Tattva gyān** (H), **Tat giān** (Pu) *Lit.* knowledge (*jñāna*, *gyān*) of Truth (*Tattva*); knowledge of Reality; knowledge of Reality or the mystic Truth; a thorough knowledge of the ultimate Principle; true knowledge; also, insight into the essential principles of something; a thorough knowledge of science, religion, spirituality, or any particular subject. Hence, one who has apprehended Reality is sometimes described as a *tattvajñānī* or a *tattvettri* – a knower (*jñānī*, *vettri*) of Reality (*Tattva*), a knower of the Essence, a knower of Truth.

On attaining *tattvajñāna*, *Brahman* is understood to be the sole Reality of everything:

All that is perceived, or heard, is nothing but *Brahman*. Attaining knowledge of Reality (*tattvajñāna*), one sees the universe as *Brahman*, which is existence-knowledge-bliss.

*Shankara, Ātmabodha 64; cf. SKS p.220*

*Tattvajñāna* is synonymous with knowledge of the Self (*Ātman*), which is *Brahman*. On reaching this level during human life, though the fate (*prārabdha*) *karma* remains, it no longer has any influence on a realized soul:

Even after *ātmajñāna* (knowledge of the Self) has awakened, *prārabdha* (*karma*) does not depart; but he does not feel *prārabdha* after the dawning of *tattvajñāna*, because the body and other things are unreal (*asat*), like the things seen in a dream upon awakening.

That *karma* which has been accrued from former births, and is called *prārabdha*, does not at all affect one who knows the Truth (*tattvajñānī*), as there is no rebirth for him.

*Nāḍabindu Upanishad 22–23; cf. TMU pp.195–96*

Guru Arjun says that such knowledge is a treasure, found with the help of God's mystic Word or Name:

One whose heart is filled with faith in God –  
the *Tat giān* (knowledge of Reality) is revealed to his mind.

*Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 285, AGK*

The supreme Lord God is the treasure of peace (*sukh*):  
the ambrosial Name of the Lord is the essence of Reality (*Tat giān*).

*Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 1146, AGK*

The Jain seeker and scholar Samantabhadra (*fl.c.* C2nd–5th CE) indicates how enlightenment illumines everything:

Knowledge of Reality (*tattvajñāna*) and valid evidence (*pramāṇa*) at once illuminate everything.

*Samantabhadra, Āpta-mīmāṃsā 101; cf. AMSB p.163*

See also: **tatt** (2.2).

**tawajjuh** (A), **tavajjuh** (P) *Lit.* to turn the face (*wajh*) towards; thus, attention, kindness, attentiveness, care, favour, concentration, inclination, consideration;

hence, the care and attention of God towards all created things, as in the *Qur'ān*, “Wherever you turn, there is the face (*wajh*) of God;”<sup>1</sup> the care and attention of a master towards a disciple and *vice versa*; concentration of thought, to look towards God only, inwardly and outwardly:

What is our attention (*tavajjuh*)?

It is to turn our face (*rūy*) from all but the friend.

*Dā'ir Shīrāzī, Kullīyāt 1499, KSDS1 p.95, in SSE2 p.167*

Perfect attention (*tawajjuh*) to God is total inward and outward concentration on God in one's essence and in all of one's attributes, as well as the shedding of any motivation towards anything other than God, such that no beloved, aim or desired one remains but God.

*Shāh Ni'mat Allāh Valī, Rasā'il, RNV1 pp.195–96, in SSE2 p.167*

Jāmī writes of a mystic with whom he associated, who – with a little focusing of thought (*tavajjuh*) – could withdraw his attention from this world:

Mawlānā Sa'd al-Dīn of Kāshghar, after a little concentration of thought (*tavajjuh*), used to exhibit signs of unconsciousness. Anyone ignorant of this circumstance would have fancied that he was falling asleep. When I first entered into companionship with him, I happened one day to be seated before him in the congregational mosque. According to his custom, he fell into a trance. I supposed that he was going to sleep, and I said to him, “If you desire to rest for a short time, you will not seem to me to be far off.” He smiled and said, “Apparently, you do not believe that this is something different from sleep.”

*Jāmī, Nafahāt al-Uns, NUJ pp.404–5, in MOI pp.142–43*

The care and attention bestowed by one person on another is also known as *tavajjuh*. A student learns more rapidly when receiving the personal caring attention of a teacher. There is a flow of thought between the two at a subtle level, which reflects in the student's mind as an increased understanding of the subject. 'Ināyat Khān notes that in spiritual healing, a *tavajjuh* (such as a glance) or *du'ā* (a good thought) of the spiritual healer can suffice to bring about the desired healing.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, in the relationship of master and disciple – with the exercise of his attention through a loving glance or by any other means, a master can convey much to his disciple with few or no words passing between them. 'Ināyat Khān refers to this kind of *tavajjuh* as “reflection”, in the sense that the thought of one is directed to or reflected upon the other:

(Sufis) practise *tavajjuh*, a method of receiving knowledge and power from the teacher in silence. This way is considered by Sufis to be the most essential and desirable. . . .

There are things one can teach only by speaking or by acting, but there is a way of teaching, which is called *tavajjuh*, and this way of teaching is without words. It is not external teaching; it is teaching in silence. For instance how can a man explain the spirit of sincerity, or the spirit of gratefulness? How can a man explain the ultimate truth, the idea of God? ...

Since spiritual guidance is not necessarily a study, the teaching which reaches from a teacher to a pupil does so in the form of reflection. This (kind of) teaching is called in Sufi terms *tavajjuh*. Of course one learns from books; but what one learns from a spirit, from a soul, is learnt from a living source. For instance, the same thing read in a book does not reach so deep as when it is spoken. And when it is spoken by the teacher, it goes still further. Hearing from a teacher is a direct reflection. It is not only the word that the teacher speaks, but even the silence, which is a still greater reflection. Sometimes words written on paper by the teacher also make a reflection if they have come from the depth; but if the same words are spoken by the same teacher, that reflection is greater still.

*‘Ināyat Khān, Sufi Message, SMIK10 pp.86, 76, SMIK4 p.278*

Since this kind of communication is subtle and mental, “distance makes no difference”:

Reflection also comes from the teacher from a distance. Distance makes no difference. The pupil who is near to his teacher, though he may be on the other side of the world, is closer than a person who is not near, and who may be all the time at his (master’s) side; although in the path of spiritual progress a meeting on the physical plane is necessary, and contact is valuable.

*‘Ināyat Khān, Sufi Message, SMIK4 p.280*

1. *Qur’ān* 2:115; cf. *AYA*.
2. *‘Ināyat Khān, Sufi Message, SMIK4 p.93*.

**tawājud (A), tavājud (P)** *Lit.* making ecstatic; imitative ecstasy, display of ecstasy, induced ecstasy, sympathetic ecstasy; beseeching for ecstasy (*wajd*), or trying to experience ecstasy through self-conscious effort (*takalluf*); hence also, *mutawājid* (one who imitates ecstasy). *Tawājud* covers both the honest effort to attain ecstasy by outward imitation of the condition, as well as the attempt to fool others concerning one’s inner condition:

Imitative ecstasy (*tawājud*) is one thing, ecstasy (*wajd*) is another:  
O brother, set aside your strained exertions.

*Unattributed, in Rasā’il, RNV4 p.249, in SSE1 p.186*

You exhibit yourself as an ecstatic (*ahl-i wajd*), when you are not:  
do not pretend before your fellows to be what you are not.

*Unattributed, in Rasā'il, RNV4 p.249; cf. in SSE1 p.186*

Shāh Nī'mat Allāh Valī adds that the practice can be detrimental because the feigned ecstasy arises from the imagination, which is a part of what prevents the manifestation of genuine ecstasy:

Even if the imitative ecstatic (*mutawājjid*) is sincere in trying to attain ecstasy (*wajd*), it is better if he abandons this practice, since compliance with God's will is more important than deference to people's. Furthermore, the ecstasy (*wajd*) which is manifested in the imitative ecstatic (*mutawājjid*) is to be understood as a fabrication of the imagination, . . . proceeding from the plane of imagination (*ḥaẓrat-i khayāl*) within the imaginer.

*Shāh Nī'mat Allāh Valī, Rasā'il, RNV4 p.249; cf. in SSE1 p.187*

Sufis have debated whether the practice is useful or permissible, especially in reference to a *ḥadīth* (traditional saying of the Prophet):

*Tawājjud* is a belaboured entreaty for ecstasy, an effort made voluntarily in which the mystic's realization of ecstasy is as yet imperfect. Certain *ṣūfī* schools disapprove of it because of the pretension and affectation it involves, but it is approved of by other schools, if by means of *tawājjud* the mystic is seeking the attainment of true ecstasy.

To justify their viewpoint, they quote the Prophet's saying, "(When you recite the *Qur'ān*, weep, or) if you are not weeping, pretend that you are weeping."<sup>1</sup> This view, of course, only has relevance in regard to a person whose character is worthy enough to weep, and has no bearing on someone without awareness, and of only a whimsical nature.

*Jurjānī, Ta'rīfāt, KTJ pp.67–68; cf. in SSE1 p.186*

Hujwīrī indicates that honest imitation is acceptable so long as the motivation is to experience what is real:

It is a well-known story that Junayd and Muḥammad ibn Masrūq<sup>2</sup> and Abū al-'Abbās ibn 'Aṭā' were together, and the singer (*qawwāl*) was chanting a verse. Junayd remained calm while his two friends fell into a forced ecstasy (*tavājjud*). On their asking him why he did not participate in the chanting (*samā'*), he recited the word of God: "You may think them (the mountains) motionless, but they will pass like the clouds."<sup>3</sup>

*Tavājjud* is taking pains to produce *wajd* by representing to one's mind, for example, the bounties and evidences of God, and thinking of union (*ittiṣāl*) and wishing for the practices of holy men. Some do

this *tavājud* in a formal manner, and imitate them by outward motions and methodical dancing and grace of gesture: such *tavājud* is absolutely unlawful. Others do it in a spiritual manner, with the desire of attaining to their condition and degree. The Messenger said, “He who makes himself like unto a people is one of them,” and he said, “When you recite the *Qur’ān*, weep, or if you weep not, then endeavour to weep.” This tradition proclaims that *tavājud* is permissible. Hence that spiritual director said: “I will go a thousand leagues in falsehood, that one step of the journey may be true.”

*Hujwīrī, Kashf al-Maḥjūb XXV, KMM p.541; cf. KM pp.415–16*

See also: **pāy kōftan** (8.4).

1. *Ḥadīth*, also in *RQQQ* p.37.
2. Apparently a mistake for Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad.
3. *Qur’ān* 27:88.

**tawḥīd** (A/P) *Lit.* oneness, union, unity, unification; also, the affirmation or profession of divine unity; the declaration of the belief that there is only one God; from *waḥada* (to make one, to declare or acknowledge oneness); the original and fundamental tenet of Islam. In the *Qur’ān*, the oneness of God (*tawḥīd Ilāhī*) is reaffirmed thirty-six times, for instance:

Say: “I am but a man like yourselves,  
 (but) the inspiration has come to me,  
 that your God is one God:  
 Whoever expects to meet his Lord,  
 let him work righteousness,  
 and, in the worship of his Lord,  
 admit no one as partner.”

*Qur’ān* 18:110, AYA

Your God is one God.

*Qur’ān* 16:22, AYA

Say: “*Allāh* is the Creator of all things:  
 He is the One, the Supreme and Irresistible.”

*Qur’ān* 13:16; cf. AYA

And your God is one God:  
 there is no god but He,  
 Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

*Qur’ān* 2:163, AYA

Not only is He the one God, but it is blasphemy to suggest that *Allāh* has had a son or has a partner of any sort:

Had *Allāh* wished to take to Himself a son,  
 He could have chosen whom He pleased  
 out of those whom He creates:  
 But glory be to Him! (He is above such things.)  
 He is *Allāh*, the One, the Irresistible.

*Qur'ān* 39:4; cf. AYA

To conceive of something existing alongside the One is to commit the cardinal sin of *shirk*, the converse of *tawḥīd*.

The doctrine of *tawḥīd* is interpreted by Islamic theologians in two contrary ways. One view is that *Allāh* is all-inclusive and that there is nothing outside of Him. This is the more traditional viewpoint.

Contemporary Islamic literalism, however, interprets the oneness of God to mean that there can be nothing in His creation which remotely resembles Him in any way, either by similarity, analogy, or in quality. The only exception to this is the *Qur'ān*, whose teaching is held to be uncreated, and, in the belief of the *Ḥanbalīs*, this includes its letters and sounds as well. The creation is held to be something other than *Allāh* and the question of how it came into being is left unanswered.

For the Sufis, *tawḥīd* involves far more than the mere affirmation of the oneness of God. *Tawḥīd*, they say, is a matter of mystic experience, not of intellectual study or assertion. It is the removal from the self of all that is other than God. Full understanding of God's unity only comes when the soul attains union with Him. Thus the doctrine of divine unity was developed into a philosophy of divine union:

*Tawḥīd* is that state in which nothing except God is seen.

*Al-Ghazālī, Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* 1:8, IUDG1 p.403, RRS p.23

Unity (*tawḥīd*) is the detachment of the heart from transitoriness through the vision of eternity.

*Rūzbihān, Sharḥ-i Shatḥiyāt* 422:1109, CPS p.567, in SSE3 p.53

What does it mean to gain knowledge of unity (*tawḥīd*)?

To burn your self in the presence of the One.

*Rūmī, Maṣnavī* I:3009; cf. MJR2 p.164

True unity (*tawḥīd*) is the annihilation of your own egotistic tendencies through friendship with God, and the annihilation of your own lack



of faith through faith in God, in order that you may become totally annihilated in God's totality.

*Ruwaym, in Tadhkirat al-Awliyā' 2, TAN2 p.66; cf. in SSE3 p.53*

To the Sufis, *tawḥīd* is not a verbal affirmation of faith, nor is it something that is understood intellectually. Says Abū Sa'īd:

To sweep the dust of multiplicity from the threshold of the heart is better than vainly stringing together pearls (verses) concerning unity (*wahdat*). Do not speak arrogantly, for divine unity (*tawḥīd*) means seeing the One, not just speaking of oneness.

*Abū Sa'īd al-Khayr, Rubā'īyāt, in FNI3 p.44; cf. in SSE3 p.53*

And Shaykh Shiblī observes:

He has missed the perfume of *tawḥīd* who conceptualizes it, contemplates realities, affirms Names, ascribes Attributes, and juggles with descriptions. He who affirms and denies all of these may have the properties and titles of one who professes unity, but not his reality and existence.

*Shaykh Shiblī, in Luma' fī al-Taṣawwuf, KLTA p.32; cf. in SMK p.94*

The nineteenth-century Lebanese writer, Fāris al-Shidyāq, notes that he who can "observe his own *tawḥīd*" is still conscious of the self, and has therefore not attained *tawḥīd*:

He who professes unity in speech is not 'one with Him' in his innermost consciousness. That is, if he can express *tawḥīd* in words, it must mean that he can observe his own *tawḥīd* in order to describe it, and therefore cannot be 'one with God'. If he were observing God, he would have no news of his own *tawḥīd*.

*Fāris al-Shidyāq, in Khulāṣah-i Sharḥ-i Ta'arruf, KSTK pp.449–50*

Many Muslims believe that simply to make the verbal affirmation of faith is sufficient for redemption. Sufis have differed:

It is the vision of the heart that is of value, not the tongue's speech. . . . The (true servant) is he who fears the majesty of God and frees himself from carnal desires. Until you empty yourself of self, you will not be able to escape from it. It is not enough for me to repeat, "*Lā ilāha illā Allāh* (there is no god but God)," to become a Muslim. (It is written:) "Most of them have not believed in God, but are polytheists,"<sup>1</sup> that is,

they have made profession of faith with the tongue, but most of them in their hearts are polytheists.

*Abū Saʿīd al-Khayr, Asrār al-Tawḥīd, ATSI p.283, in RM p.78*

Al-Ghazālī has much to say on the same subject:

By *tawḥīd*, we do not mean merely lip service to the article of Muslim faith, “*Lā ilāha illā Allāh*.” By mere lip service you can save your life and property in this world. But your life and property in the next world, which is of a different kind to that of this world, cannot be saved by mere lip service. There must be real *tawḥīd*, which consists of a firm belief in the heart that everything is from God. That is, God is the primal, first Cause of all. A person who knows this cannot be angry with anyone for any action they perform, and he remains established in contentment (*tawakkul*). There are various degrees of experience in the realm of *tawḥīd*. The experience of some is like a grain of seed, while that of others like that of a mountain.

*Al-Ghazālī, IḥyāʾʿUlūm al-Dīn 4:1, IUDG4 p.39; cf. RRS pp.128–29*

For al-Ghazālī, *tawḥīd* is very much a matter of genuine faith, rather than mere verbal repetition of belief:

Our object is to rivet our attention on *tawḥīd*. *Tawḥīd* means that we should look to the Cause of all causes, to the primal Cause, and if our faith is firm in His clemency, our belief becomes firm in His being the Cause of all causes.

*Al-Ghazālī, IḥyāʾʿUlūm al-Dīn 4:5, IUDG4 p.342; cf. RRS p.248*

Mere affirmation of faith does not redeem. Real faith matters, and that is *tawḥīd*. If at the same time a person also offers obeisance to his sensual desires, then his *tawḥīd* is merely lip service, and not real *tawḥīd*. *Tawḥīd* is worship and faith in one Divinity. It is real when the one who utters the Muslim profession of faith, “*Lā ilāha illā Allāh*,” leaves the world and gives up meddling with all things that are not God.

Very narrow is the path of pure *tawḥīd*. In this respect, a little coolness and adulteration is found in the faith of practically every individual.

*Al-Ghazālī, IḥyāʾʿUlūm al-Dīn 4:1, IUDG4 p.35; cf. RRS p.128*

Q: What is *tawḥīd*?

A: One must have faith that all acts proceed from God and not from the means and causes employed in their performance. One should think that all good and evil proceeds from Him. The highest

stage of *tawḥīd* is attained when one is established in *tawakkul* (trust in God). The other fruit is never to complain of the wrongs done to oneself by the people of the world; not to get angry with them, but to remain content, following the commandments of God, surrendering all one's acts to Him. . . .

In the highest stage of *tawḥīd*, one must consider all acts as emanating from God without considering any of the intermediary causes. One should worship God and not be a slave of one's lower self. He is the worst among creatures who is a slave to his desires. He who believes that everything emanates from God, how can he be angry with anyone?

*Al-Ghazālī, Ihya' 'Ulūm al-Dīn 1:1, IUDG1 pp.48–49; cf. RRS pp.4–5*

Sufi systematizers have understood *tawḥīd* as a particular station or level of attainment on the inward journey:

If God desires to be united with one of his servants, He opens to him the gate of worship; and if he delights in worship, He opens to him the gate of nearness; then He raises him to the station of fellowship; then He seats him on the throne of unification (*tawḥīd*). Then He raises the veil from him, and makes him enter into His own oneness, and unveils to him His glory and majesty; and when the servant's eyes fall upon the glory and majesty of God, he remains outside of himself and he comes into the care of God, and is freed from self forever.

*Abū Sa'īd al-Kharrāz, in Lawāqīḥ al-Anwār 2, LA2 p.79; cf. in RMI p.31*

A number of Sufis have identified several stages of *tawḥīd*. The verbal affirmation of belief in the one God is *tawḥīd 'āmmah* (union of the common); this is the status of the common man. Having faith that everything comes from God is *tawḥīd khāṣṣah* (union of the elect), though there may still remain some iota of doubt; this is the status of the devotee. Attaining union with God is *tawḥīd lā ta'ayyun* (universal union); this is the status of the true mystic.

Dividing the first stage into two, al-Ghazālī identifies four stages of *tawḥīd*, likening them to a walnut with its soft outer covering, within which is the shell containing the kernel, within which is walnut oil. "Now," he says, "Apply the illustration to the case of the *kalimah* (word, the Muslim creed)." The four stages are:

1. Mere repetition with the lips, with no belief in the heart; such a person is a heretic (*munāfiq*).
2. The common man's belief in the *kalimah*; his heart believes in it.

3. Contemplating the truth of it (the *kalimah*) by the divine light, which by God's grace has been bestowed upon him; such a person is a near one (*muqarrab*).
4. Seeing nothing except the essence of God; such a person knows that His essence is unity and that He is without any peer or sharer. This is the stage of the true and perfect ones (*ṣiddīqayn*). Here the ego of the individual is so annihilated that he does not even see himself. He is so absorbed in the Divinity that he is dead to himself.

*Al-Ghazālī, Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn 4:5, IUDG4 p.326; cf. RRS p.234*

Regarding the advantages of these stages, he says that a person at the first stage is at least saved from the "clutches of the law", in that he cannot be accused of heresy. A person at the second stage escapes hell even though he may not have full faith, so long as he lives a virtuous life and has avoided sin. He continues:

The third sees that the prime Doer and Cause of all causes is the one God; he contemplates this truth also and establishes that attitude in his heart by reasoning. The fourth sees the one God everywhere. He sees no multiplicity anywhere. This is the highest stage of *tawḥīd*.

This can be compared to the oil in the walnut in the above illustration. Just as the outer covering of the walnut is useless, so too with the first type who merely utters the *kalimah* with his lips, without the testimony of the heart. The second type of faith only helps in life until the hour of death. Then, just as the second outer covering protects the kernel, but is cast aside when the kernel is extracted, so also on death when the body is discarded as useless. This stage of *tawḥīd* does not help in the life after death. . . . So, without actual vision (*kashf*) of the Reality, this *tawḥīd* does not help very much.

As to the third stage – observe how even the kernel, after the oil has been extracted from it, is no more than a husk, a useless thing. Observe, too, how closely the oil is attached to the kernel. This reminds us of the fact that the act and the actor are one. This is a high stage. But since there is the admixture of an alien thing (with the Reality), this stage too is also lower, and the person still retains a consciousness of multiplicity. . . .

The last stage is attained when nothing except God is seen. The one unity is seen all around, and nothing else besides. This state cannot last for long in an individual. It comes generally as a flash of lightning. . . . The fourth stage is of *fanā'* (annihilation of self).

*Al-Ghazālī, Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn 4:5, IUDG4 pp.327–28; cf. RRS pp.234–36*

The uncompromising affirmation of God's unity and oneness permits that nothing else should be adored or worshipped but God. Consequently, existence is unique to God, and nothing else exists except the Being of the Supreme. The greatest exponent in the Muslim world of this aspect of mysticism was Ibn al-ʿArabī. The modern scholar, W.C. Chittick, writes:

Ibn al-ʿArabī directs all of his teachings at *tawḥīd*, affirming the unity of God and the consequent unity of all things that exist...

Ibn al-ʿArabī is known as the founder of the school of the Oneness of Being (*Waḥdat al-Wujūd*). Though he does not employ the term, the idea permeates his works. Simply stated, there is only one Being, and all existence is nothing but the manifestation or outward radiance of that One Being. Hence 'everything other than the One Being' – that is, the whole cosmos in all its spatial and temporal extension – is non-existent in itself; though it may be considered to exist through Being.

Stated in these terms, the 'Oneness of Being' may appear to some people as another brand of 'pantheism'. But in fact this simplified expression of what the *shaykh* is talking about cannot begin to do him justice; especially since terms like 'pantheism' are almost invariably employed with a dismissive and critical intent.

When the *shaykh* himself explains what he means by the statement that Being is one, he provides one of the most sophisticated and nuanced expressions of the profession of God's unity (*tawḥīd*) to be found in Islamic thought. His teachings did not dominate the second half of Islamic intellectual history because people were simple-minded and therefore ready to accept 'pantheism' in place of *tawḥīd* – quite the contrary. What Ibn al-ʿArabī provides is an inexhaustible ocean of meditations upon the unity of God and its relationship with the manyness of all things, a synthesis of the various currents of Islamic intellectuality that yielded endless insights into the nature of existence.

W.C. Chittick, *Path of Knowledge*, SPK pp.52, 79

To Ibn al-ʿArabī, only one Being truly exists. Everything else is His manifestation. The entire creation has no existence in and of itself. It exists only through the divine Being. As he says, "Do not let manyness veil you from the *tawḥīd* of *Allāh*!"<sup>2</sup>

Ultimately, leaving aside all theological and intellectual discussion, the matter is very simple:

Become lost in God! – This is divine union (*tawḥīd*);  
And losing this losing of self means detachment from self.

ʿAṭṭār, *Conference of the Birds* 3787, MTAN p.405; cf. in SSE12 p.77

See also: **muwahḥid** (►4), **yihud**.

1. *Qurʾān* 12:106.
2. Ibn al-ʿArabī, *Meccan Revelations* 2:619.27, 620.9, *FMIA4* (4:282) p.372, *SPK* p.155.

**téng** (C) *Lit.* soar, rise, hover (*téng*). See **fēi**.

**tevunah** (He) *Lit.* intelligence, insight, discernment; derived from the word *binah* (understanding), the third of the ten *sefirot* (divine emanations); in contemporary Hebrew, philosophy or metaphysics, even scientific understanding; the ability to derive one idea or thought from another that is different from it.<sup>1</sup>

The term appears in *Proverbs*, a collection of sayings that attempts to correct people's ignorance of God and so improve their understanding and behaviour:

Does not wisdom (*hokhmah*) call,  
and understanding (*tevunah*) put forth her voice?  
She stands at the top of high places by the way,  
where the paths meet.  
She cries out at the gates, at the entry of the city,  
at the coming in of the doors.  
To you, O men, I call,  
and my voice is to the sons of man.  
O you simple (people), understand (*havinu*) prudence:  
and you fools, be of an understanding (*havinu*) heart.

*Proverbs 8:1–6, KB*

Here, *tevunah* is paralleled with *hokhmah* (wisdom). *Hokhmah*, however, can be understood literally, or metaphorically as the divine creative power. Elsewhere in *Proverbs* and in some associated biblical texts, the latter meaning is clearly intended.<sup>2</sup> Interestingly, the medieval kabbalists seem to have understood such passages this way when they named the active, creative power of God as the *sefirah* or emanation of *Hokhmah*, with *Binah* as the *sefirah* that receives the flow of *Hokhmah*. *Binah* was thus regarded as the 'womb' of the creation, from which the remaining seven *sefirot* or divine qualities flowed.

The *Ḥabad ḥasidim* (C18th–19th) used *tevunah* for the engagement of their intellectual faculties in the contemplation of God's omniscience, a practice intended to lead to the annihilation of all separation between the practitioner and God. This state is mentioned briefly by Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Lyady, and greatly expanded upon by his son Rabbi Dov Baer Schneerson. In his *Kuntres ha-Hitpa'alut*, Rabbi Dov Baer describes *tevunah* as such deep

intellectual contemplation of a subject that the contemplator can convey the entirety of his contemplative understanding to others. Using imagery from *Proverbs* (“Deep water is the counsel in a person’s heart, and the man of understanding (*tevunah*) can draw it out”<sup>3</sup>), he says that having this ability is like being able to draw water from the depths and make it available it to others.<sup>4</sup>

*Tevunah* is also the etymological derivation of the term *hitbonenut*, used by the *Habad ḥasidim* for reflection upon the way in which the creation is manifested from the Divine.

See also: **hitbonenut** (8.5).

1. Sara Klein-Braslavy, *Without Any Doubt*, WDGB p.105 (n.112).
2. E.g. *Proverbs* 1:20–33, 3:13–19, 4:7–9, 8:22–36; *Wisdom of Solomon* 1:4–7, 6:12–16, 7:7–30, 8:1–8; *Wisdom of Jesus ben Sirach* 1:4–10, 4:11–22, 6:18–37, 14:20–27, 15:1–10; see **Hokhmah** (3.1).
3. *Proverbs* 20:5.
4. Rabbi Dov Baer Schneerson, *Kuntres ha-Hitpa’alut* 2, KHDB; see Naftali Lowenthal, *Communicating the Infinite*, CIHL p.150.

**Thalung** (Ngarrindjeri) *Lit.* tongue; an Australian Aboriginal term for the ‘Voice’ of *Byamee* (Great Spirit) that is experienced as a presence in all things.

The Ngarrindjeri scientist, theologian and polymath David Unaipon (1872–1967) retells a story of how it came to be that the Aborigines understand the omnipresence of the Great Spirit:

The Australian Aborigines have a greater and deeper sense of morality and religion than is generally known. From a very early age the mothers and the old men of the tribe instruct the children by means of tales and stories. This is one of the many stories that is handed down from generation to generation by my people.

In the beginning, the Great Spirit spoke directly everyday to his people. The tribes could not see the Great Spirit but they could hear his voice, and they assembled early every morning to hear him. Gradually, however, the tribes grew weary of listening to the Great Spirit and they said one to the other: “Oh, I am tired of this listening to a voice I cannot see; so let us go and enjoy ourselves by making our own corroborees (rituals).”

The Great Spirit was grieved when he heard this, and as the tribes did not assemble to hear him but went and enjoyed themselves at the corroborees, the Great Spirit said: “I must give the people a sign that they will understand.”

He sent his servant Narroondarie to call all the tribes together again once more. Narroondarie did so, saying: "The Great Spirit will not speak again to you but he wishes to give you a sign."

All the tribes came to the meeting. When every one was seated on the ground, Narroondarie asked them all to be very silent. Suddenly a terrific rending noise was heard. Narroondarie had so placed all the tribes that the meeting was being held around a large gum tree. The tribes looked and saw this huge tree being slowly split open by some invisible force. Also, down out of the sky came an enormous *Thalung*, which disappeared into the middle of the gum tree, and the tree closed up again.

After this wonderful performance Narroondarie said to the tribes: "You may go away now to your hunting and corroborees."

Away went the tribes to enjoy themselves. After a long time some of them began to grow weary of pleasure and longed to hear again the Great Spirit. They asked Narroondarie if he would call upon the Great Spirit to speak to them again.

Narroondarie answered: "No, the Great Spirit will never speak to you again."

The tribes went to the sacred burial grounds to ask the dead to help them but the dead did not answer. Then they asked the great Naboolea (equivalent to the English Nebulae), who lives in the Milky Way, if he would help them but still there was no answer and the tribes at last cried aloud with sorrow and regret. They cut their bodies with sharp stones and painted themselves white. They began to fear that they would never get in touch again with the Great Spirit.

The tribes finally appealed to Wy-young-gurrie ('He who returns to the stars'), the wise old blackfellow who lives in the Southern Cross. He told them to gather about the big gum tree again. When all were there, Wy-young-gurrie asked: "Did you not see the *Thalung* go into this tree?"

"Yes," answered the tribes.

"Well," said Wy-young-gurrie, "take that as a sign that the *Thalung* of the Great Spirit is in all things."

Thus it is today that the Aborigines know that the Great Spirit is in all things and speaks through every form of nature. *Thalung* speaks through the voice of the wind; he rides on the storm; he speaks out from the thunder. *Thalung* is everywhere, and manifests through the colour of the bush, the birds, the flowers, the fish, the streams; in fact, everything that the Aboriginal sees, hears, tastes, and feels – there is *Thalung*.

*David Unaipon, Legendary Tales of the Australian Aborigines, LTAU pp.150–51*



**theology** (L. *theologia*) From the Greek, the study or knowledge (*logia*) of God (*theos*); hence, systematic, dogmatic or speculative theology, which are the intellectual or conceptual study of the nature of the Divine; hence, in Christianity, the study of the Christian doctrine concerning God, the Trinity, and so on; also, pastoral theology, directed towards those preparing for the ministry or priesthood, and which relates to the spiritual needs of a congregation; also, mystical theology, being either the study of mystical concepts relating to the inner experience of God, or the direct experience of the inner presence of God within oneself; hence, active and conscious participation in or perception of the realities of the spiritual world; experiential knowledge of God.

*Theologia* is a term used extensively by the fourth-century desert father, Evagrius, who described three stages on the spiritual path: *praktikē*, *physikē*, and *theologia*. *Praktikē* is the stage of developing human virtues, of striving for human perfection; *physikē* is contemplation; and *theologia* is knowledge (*gnōsis*), or actual experience of God as He is in Himself.<sup>1</sup> Evagrius also speaks of *apatheia* (serenity, tranquillity) as the fruit of contemplation and the gateway to *theologia*: “*Apatheia* gives birth to love; love is the door of natural knowledge, which leads to *theologia* and final bliss.”<sup>2</sup>

For Evagrius, who exercised a huge influence upon Eastern Christianity and the later monastic tradition of the Orthodox Church, prayer was more a state of being than something practised. Hence, one who knows God in prayer becomes a *theologos* (theologian). “If you are a theologian,” he writes, “you will pray truly; and if you pray truly, you are a theologian.”<sup>3</sup>

Around 500 CE, a Syrian monk of significant intellectual prowess and mystical experience penned a series of Greek treatises and letters in the name of Dionysius the Areopagite (also known as Denys), a convert of Paul who receives a passing mention in *Acts*.<sup>4</sup> The intention of these writings (which include the text, *On Mystical Theology*, Gk. *Peri Mystikēs Theologias*) seems to have been to interpret Christian theology, especially concerning the Trinity, in the light of Greek mystical thought. According to this writer, for instance, the incarnation in Christ of the divine Word, which is the true Son of God, was the means whereby the One entered the world of multiplicity.

These pseudo-Dionysian texts, with their insistence on God as the primal and utterly transcendent One who is at the same time immanent in His creation, and which also stress the importance of mystical union with the Divine, became hugely influential in the development of medieval Christian doctrine. The first English translation of *Mystical Theology* was so popular that it was quaintly said to have “run across England like deere”.<sup>5</sup> The fourteenth-century author of the *Cloud of Unknowing* acknowledges his debt at the end of his book, when he writes: “Anyone who looks in Dionysius’ books will find that his words will clearly confirm everything I have said, or will yet say, from start to finish.”<sup>6</sup>

This work (of contemplation), when it is rightly practised, is that reverent love, that ripe, harvested fruit of a man's heart which I told you about in my little *Letter on Prayer*. It is the cloud of unknowing, the secret love planted deep in an undivided heart, the Ark of the Covenant. It is Dionysius' mystical theology, what he calls his wisdom and his treasure, his luminous darkness, and his unknowing knowing. It is this that establishes you in a silence beyond thought and words; it is this that makes your prayer so concentrated; and it is this that teaches you to forsake and despise the world.

*Book of Privy Counselling 7; cf. CU (11) p.158, CUCW p.181, LPD p.47*

It is from the terminology of Dionysius that mystics such as Teresa of Ávila and John of the Cross came to speak of the contemplative awareness of God in the soul as 'mystical theology'. John of the Cross equates mystical theology with the dark night of the soul, the deep inner darkness wherein the soul seeks the Divine. This dark night, he says, is as "an inflowing of God into the soul, which purges it from its ignorances and imperfections, habitual, natural and spiritual, and which is called by contemplatives 'infused contemplation', or 'mystical theology'",<sup>7</sup> and "which signifies the secret and hidden wisdom of God".<sup>8</sup> He also describes this mystical knowledge of God as a "delectable science" known as "mystical theology – the secret science of God, which spiritual men call contemplation".<sup>9</sup>

St Teresa speaks of mystical theology as a complete suspension of the memory and reasoned or intellectual understanding:

When imagining Christ within me, in order to place myself in his presence, or sometimes even when reading, I used to experience a consciousness of the presence of God unexpectedly, such that I could in no way doubt that He was within me or that I was totally immersed in Him. This was in no sense a vision: I believe they call the experience 'mystical theology'. The soul is suspended in such a way that it seems to be completely outside itself. The will loves; the memory, it seems to me, is almost lost; while the understanding, I believe, though it is not lost, does not reason – I mean that it does not function, but is as though amazed by all it understands; for God wills it to realize that it understands nothing of what His Majesty represents to it.

*Teresa of Ávila, Life 10:1; cf. CWT1 p.105, CWT1A1 p.58*

And similarly:

In mystical theology, . . . intellectual understanding ceases to function, because God suspends it. . . . What I say we should not do is to take it upon oneself to stop or suspend thought; nor should we cease to work

with the intellect. If we do, we will be left like cold simpletons, and be doing neither one thing nor the other. When the Lord suspends intellectual understanding and makes it cease from its activity, He gives it something which both holds its attention and amazes it, so that, without reasoning in any way, it can understand more in a short space of time than we can, with all our human efforts, in many years.

*Teresa of Ávila, Life 12:5; cf. CWT1 p.121, CWT1A p.72*

Among the fathers of the Orthodox Church, mystical theology is again an entering of the unfathomable depths of the divine mysteries:

Winged by dispassion and humility, and inspired by the Holy Spirit, we enter the sphere of mystical theology and the abyss of the knowledge of God's mysteries.

*Nikētas Stēthatos, On Practice of the Virtues 45, Philokalia, PCT4 p.90*

When engrossed wholeheartedly in spiritual warfare, the soul leaves the body and this world, entering the "darkness of mystical theology":

Working assiduously in this manner and guarding what it harvests, the soul goes out of the body and enters into the darkness of mystical theology. It leaves everything behind, not held back by anything belonging to the visible world; and, united with God, it ceases from toil and grief.

*Nikētas Stēthatos, On Spiritual Knowledge 39, Philokalia, PCT4 p.150*

In this state, the soul feels that it is united to God, utterly unaware of anything other than Him:

The function of mystical theology is by grace to make the soul (*nous*) like God and equal to Him – as far as this is possible – so that it becomes totally unaware, because of its transcendent state, of anything that is sequent to God.

*Maximos the Confessor, On Theology 5:94, Philokalia; cf. PCT2 p.283*

See also: **dark night**.

1. See Andrew Louth, *Origins of the Christian Mystical Tradition*, OCM pp.102–3.
2. Evagrius, *Praktikos* (Prologue), in OCM p.103.
3. Evagrius Pontikos, *On Prayer* 61, *Philokalia*, PCT1 p.62.
4. *Acts* 17:34.
5. *Oxford Book of English Mystical Verse*, OEMV p.vii.

6. *Cloud of Unknowing* 70; cf. *CU* p.127, *CUCW* p.145, *CUEU* p.256.
7. John of the Cross, *Dark Night* 5:1, *CWJC1* p.381.
8. John of the Cross, *Spiritual Canticle* 38:9; cf. *CWJC2* p.172.
9. John of the Cross, *Spiritual Canticle* 18:3, *CWJC2* pp.103–4.

**thought transference (Native North American)** Also known as telepathy, thought transference is the ability to know and directly influence the thoughts of others.

In the Native American context, and in particular to the Oglala Lakota holy man and healer Frank Fools Crow (c.1890–1989), thought transference was a means of guiding others, of helping to understand the condition of a patient, of healing them, and of serving *Wakan-Tanka* (Great Spirit).

Fools Crow also extended the meaning to include the ability to assume the forms of animals and birds, again for the purposes of healing or helping others. He explains:

*Wakan-Tanka* is only able to work with me in limited ways in a real situation. . . . I serve Him, but I remain a human being. My hands and arms and legs can only do so much. In thought transference though, there are no limits.

*Frank Fools Crow, in Secret Native American Pathways, SNPM p.75*

In order to aid his concentration, in addition to the traditional Lakota rites of the sun dance (*wiwanyag wachipi*), the purification lodge (*inipi*) and the spirit-calling ritual known as *yuwipi*, Fools Crow also used what he called “concentration tools”. These tools took the form of painted sticks, adorned with pieces of coloured cloth and various other items. Of these, Thomas Mails reports:

One tool enabled him to do thought transference – conveying thoughts and instructions to other people, influencing them, and also learning what they were being told, thinking, and doing.

*Thomas Mails, Fools Crow, FCWM p.67*

Mails describes an experience in which Fools Crow used this kind of thought transference to help a man who had undertaken a vision quest:

Fools Crow makes frequent use of transference power, especially when he takes someone on a vision quest. I experienced it once again on a summer day in South Dakota. I was giving a series of lectures to doctors and nurses at a government hospital near Bear Butte when word came to me that Fools Crow was at the sacred mountain. Later that

day, I went there to see him and found him encamped in a lush meadow that lies way up the side of the mountain. He was lost in prayer when I arrived, but he heard me coming and looked up to see who it was. By the time I reached him, he was smiling broadly, his eyes sparkled, and his arms were outstretched to embrace me. We visited for a while, and then he told me he had been there several days, keeping a vigil for a Sioux man he had brought to vision quest on the top of the mountain. They had built a sweat lodge, and I observed that just inside the entrance was a black cloth on a bed of sage; on top of this was a long string of tobacco offerings, (which implied that) the good spirits had been called.

Then he proceeded to tell me precisely what the man had been doing during his quest, going into minutest detail, and what the man had seen in his vision. At one point, Fools Crow said he had used thought transference to instruct the man to break several small branches into pieces and to fashion four crosses with them. Then he was to set the crosses in a row and focus his thoughts upon them while he prayed. This was not a common thing to do in a vision quest.

"He will be down soon," he said. "Stay and meet him, for the vision has come to him."

About fifteen minutes later, we saw him coming down the trail. He was perhaps forty years old, dressed in the traditional Sioux breechclout and moccasins. He carried in his hands a sage hoop and a portion of a buffalo skull. He looked tired, but strangely serene. He smiled slightly when we were introduced and sat heavily down by the small fire Fools Crow had built.

"Grandfather," he said, "I have had my vision."

"I know," Fools Crow replied, "and I have told my friend here what it was, so that he can see once again that I have the power from *Wakan-Tanka* and *Tunkashila* to do this. Now you must tell us both. Start at the beginning of your quest and leave nothing out."

I knew what the man would say, and yet it was incredible to find how closely his account matched that of Fools Crow – especially the part about his having been strangely moved to fashion four crosses out of sticks and to pray with them. Fools Crow smiled in a satisfied way, nodding several times as the quester proceeded. When the man was done, Fools Crow clapped his hands in approval as gleefully as a little child.

"Was it not just as I told you?" he asked me.

"Indeed it was," I answered, "indeed it was."

*Thomas Mails, Secret Native American Pathways, SNPM pp.201-3*

Mails continues, relating a conversation he had had with Fools Crow concerning imagination and reality, addressing the two common concerns of a sceptical mind – is it real and/or is it magic? –

I did not see Fools Crow for some months after that, but it was not the last time I saw him engage in thought transference. It happened often enough when we were together, to convince me that he could do it whenever he wished to – as long as the person he did it with understood and believed in the power available to him to accomplish it.

One thing more must be said here regarding thought transference. What Fools Crow sees is not always imagined. More often than not, what happens is real. A surprising mixture of real birds and animals do come as a group and talk to him while he is out praying. Just as the spirit animals do, they, too, bring him messages concerning the welfare of the Sioux. With my own eyes, I have seen real birds and animals come and sit down at his feet. And when he heals, there is no imagining to it at all. It happens, and with my own eyes, I have seen that as well.

One day, while Dallas Chief Eagle was with us, we discussed the difference between imagining, or envisioning, and reality.

“Since the creatures sometimes actually come to you,” I asked Fools Crow, “why is the thought transference necessary?”

“Because in thought transference, the spirit people of the birds and the animals come. They are higher than the earth creatures. They live in the four directions. What they know is superior to that of the earth’s creatures. It comes more directly from *Wakan-Tanka*, *Tunkashila*, and the Four Directions.”

“What about what happens to you, the change in costume, the paint, the other things? Do those really happen, too?” I asked.

“No. I only see them happening as in my mind I slip back into the ancient past and reach for our centre. They help me concentrate on what I am and what I hope to do for our people.”

“But the coloured smoke and the feathers? What about those you handed me as we walked back to your house?”

“I can make any part of what I see real. That is a power *Wakan-Tanka* gave to me when I was once at Bear Butte. One night, he called me to climb up the side of its rock cliff. I told you about that, how he put a door there, and I walked through it into the cliff, how he talked with me in there. I made the feathers real and gave them to you so you would know I could do that kind of thing.”

“Do you,” I asked, “always tell people whether what they see is real or imagined?”

“No!”

“Can you do thought transference with a group?”

“If everyone in the group believes, yes.”

“Is there a way observers can tell which is the case in a given instance?”

“When I am not doing thought transference, my clothing does not change from regular clothing to buckskins.”

“What would you say to people who call what you do magic?”

“I can do many things that most white people would call magic. But they aren’t really magic. I do not conceal things in my clothing or on my person. I do not set anything up like magicians do on television.”

*Thomas Mails, Secret Native American Pathways, SNPM pp.203–4*

See also: **concentration tools** (8.5), **vision quest** (8.5).

**tiáo, tiáohé** (C) *Lit.* to harmonize; harmony; to regulate; to mix, to blend. See **hé**.

**tikkun** (He) *Lit.* repair, perfection; restoration; a term whose evolution can be traced from its use in the *Mishnah* (C2nd CE) to its use as the cornerstone of a cosmogonic myth created by Rabbi Isaac Luria (the Ari, 1534–1572) of Safed in northern Israel, concerning the purpose of life and human participation in the divine plan:

The term is first found in the *Mishnah*, . . . where it means ‘guarding the established order’. The term is also found in the third section of the *Aleinu* prayer, dating from the talmudic era (C1st–6th CE), where it means ‘perfecting the world under the rule of God’. Maimonides in the twelfth century expanded its meaning. He defined it as an approach to the rulings and customs of the rabbis that is intended “to strengthen the religion and order the world”. The Ari’s myth changed the meaning of the term again, so that it now refers to his all-inclusive myth, which begins with the creation of the world and ends with the messianic era, known as the ‘End of Days’.

*Howard Schwartz, “How the Ari Created a Myth,” in AMHS*

According to Luria, at the time of creation, the primal divine Light (*Aur Ayn-Sof*, the infinite Godhead) was dispersed as sparks into the creation, in an uncontrolled manner, through a process he called *shevirat ha-kelim* (breaking of the vessels). By adhesion to the *kelipot* (shells) – the shards of the broken vessels – the sparks became mixed with matter and consequently with evil (understood as the absence of spiritual light). *Tikkun* is the process by which the sparks, now ubiquitous in all created things, can return to their source in the primal Light. *Tikkun* describes how the *sefirot* (emanations of divine qualities), which became unbalanced with respect to each another, may return to harmony, and by which the *Shekhinah* (the divine immanence) may reunite with the supreme Lord.

In the very beginning, before the process of creation began, through a process that Luria calls *zimzum* (contraction or withdrawal of the *Ayn-Sof* into Itself), God expelled from Himself the potential for negativity, duality, or matter. This contraction produced a vacuum (*tehiru*), into which the *Ayn-Sof* projected the contrasting opposites of the *sefirot*, creating the primordial differentiation that underlies all created things; and thus began the process of creation. As a result of *zimzum*, the *sefirot* emanated from the *Ayn-Sof*, becoming polarized as positive and negative, and providing the origin of the duality inherent in creation and by which creation is manifest. Prior to this event, the *sefirot* had existed in harmonious balance within the *Ayn-Sof*.

With the contraction of the *Ayn-Sof* into itself, the *sefirah* of *Hokhmah* (Wisdom) separated from *Binah* (Understanding), and the *sefirah* of *Din* (Judgment), also known as *Gevurah* (Might), separated from the *sefirah* of *Hesed* (Mercy). The other *sefirot* also polarized into their opposites. *Hokhmah* is active, *Binah* is receptive or 'feminine'; *Din* is 'male' or positive, and *Hesed* is 'female' or negative. *Tikkun* involves restoring these opposites to their original harmonious unity.

The outflow of the previously unified divine energy from the infinite One into creation results in its differentiation and polarization. The downward and outward flow is negative; the upward and inward flow is positive. Thus the scattering of the divine light into the creation, through its adhesion to the *kelipot* (shards of matter), is outward or negative. It is paralleled by the soul's descent into the creation and the scattering of its attention throughout the realms of mind and matter. The return of the attention to the spiritual realms within represents the positive flow. It signals the end of duality and return to the unity of the Source, to restoration of the divine harmony.

To explain the concept of *tikkun* as the means of restoring harmony to the spiritual realms, Luria uses another metaphor, that of the five *parzufim* (faces, configurations; sg. *parzuf*). According to this teaching, the infinite, undifferentiated light of *Ayn-Sof* was too pure, powerful and intense to enter the lower realms of the creation. It first needed to be organized, its component aspects filtered and arranged into structure and form. These configurations of the component aspects of the divine Light, he called the *parzufim*.

When pure white light is passed through a prism, it separates into its component colours. In the same way, it is only when the pure divine Light – the primal Unity – is separated into its various component parts or qualities that it can enter the creation. These qualities or attributes are the ten *sefirot* – the emanations, the separate 'colours' or qualities of the divine Light.

Since they are all aspects of the same one Light, none of the *sefirot* can exist in isolation from the others. The *sefirot* are therefore arranged into particular structures or configurations, the *parzufim*. According to Luria, all the *sefirot* are present in each of the *parzufim*, but a different *sefirah* predominates in each one. Each *parzuf* thus has a different character, although it is made up of the same divine aspects or qualities as the others.



When the primal divine Light became dispersed into the creation, the harmonious flow of energy among the *parzufim* was interrupted, and the divine realms entered a state of imbalance and disharmony. This dispersion of the primal Light is what Luria calls the cosmic catastrophe of the *shevirat ha-kelim* (breaking of the vessels). He describes the five *parzufim* as:

1. *Arikh Anpin. Lit.* the Long-Faced One, the Long-Suffering One, the Patient One; *i.e.* the Godhead, the Supreme Being.
2. *Abba. Lit.* Father.
3. *Imma. Lit.* Mother.
4. *Ze'ir Anpin. Lit.* the Short-Faced One, the Impatient One, the Male; *i.e.* the level of judgment.
5. *Nukva. Lit.* the Female; the level of mercy.

In their original state, the union between the Father and the Mother was constant and harmonious; likewise between the Impatient One and the Female. The two pairs looked at each other 'face to face', and the divine energy flowed continuously and harmoniously between them.

*Arikh Anpin*, the Patient One or Long-Suffering One, represents the constant, unchanging primal unity beyond differentiation that prevails in the *Ayn-Sof*. Sometimes, *Arikh Anpin* is identified with *Keter* (Crown), the highest *sefirah*, which is generally regarded as an aspect of the Godhead. *Arikh Anpin* is contrasted with *Ze'ir Anpin*, the Impatient One, who represents constant change – the hallmark of the realms of duality that comprise creation. *Abba* and *Imma*, the Father and Mother, are metaphors for the initial differentiation of the divine power into the positive and negative forces, the duality that constitutes the potential for the creation.

The restoration (*tikkun*) of the *parzufim* is therefore an account of the restoration of a primal spiritual unity to the divine forces that had been separated into positive and negative, male and female, outward and inward, and all the other aspects of duality. *Tikkun* represents the reuniting of the male and female aspects in spiritual restoration, wholeness, and a return to their source in the undifferentiated, infinite Oneness.

Isaac Luria and other kabbalists also use the symbolism inherent in the biblical Garden of Eden story to explain *tikkun*. According to the *Zohar* (C13th), Adam, through his meditation, was meant to bring about the *tikkun* of the sparks by raising them to their source, with which they would reunite. Being a microcosm of the Primal Adam (*Adam Kadmon*), who symbolically contains the entire creation within himself, he had the potential to do so. However, according to Luria's interpretation, Adam sinned by eating of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil (the tree of duality), and was banished from the Garden of Eden. The Tree of Life which grew in the Garden of Eden, which was Adam's intended heritage, represented the unalloyed spiritual realm, but Adam lost access to that realm when he fell to temptation and ate

of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. In simple terms, one could say that he allowed his attention to fall from contemplation upon union with the Godhead and so entered the realm of duality, where he developed the sense of an individual self and was thereby separated from the Divine.

The *Zohar* says that Adam's exile from Eden is the story of the separation of the sparks from the primal divine Light and their imprisonment in matter through adhesion to the *kelipot* (shards of matter). This process symbolizes the exile of the pure spiritual light of the soul into the realms of matter and illusion. Adam's action was a catastrophe; it threw awry the balance and relationships between the divine powers (the *sefirot*).

Luria expanded the symbolism by teaching that the relationship between the *parzufim* was disrupted because of Adam's sin. Two of the *parzufim*, for instance, the Impatient One and the Female, were turned 'back to back', symbolizing the disruption and polarization of their energy flow. As a result, all the cosmic relationships that depended on the continuous energy flow between these two *parzufim* were thrown into chaos. Good and evil became materialized, and Adam entered the physical realm. Using the biblical metaphor, "God made clothes out of skins" for Adam and Eve,<sup>1</sup> which means that they had acquired material bodies.

A further myth is used to depict the disharmony in creation and the *tikkun* that is necessary to correct it. This involves the *Shekhinah*, the immanent divine presence symbolized by the tenth *sefirah* of *Malkut* (Kingship, Dominion). As a result of Adam's fall, the *Shekhinah* became estranged from *Yahweh*, who is symbolized by *Tiferet* (Beauty), the sixth *sefirah*. According to the myth, the *Shekhinah* is the bride and *Tiferet* the bridegroom. The estrangement between the two is another way of saying that the positive and negative qualities within the Godhead had become opposed to each other and that the divine power no longer flowed harmoniously between them. The nett result is that the *Shekhinah* is in exile in the realm of matter.

Although mystical realization and divine union are the universal heritage of all human beings, some of the Jewish mystics, like Luria, believed that the Jews had a particular role to play in effecting the *tikkun* by performing practices known as *tikkunim*. The *tikkunim* are comprised of a range of rituals, meditations (*yihudim*, unifications), specially focused prayers, and observance of the *miẓvot* (biblical commandments). These practices were taught as a means of bringing about *tikkun* not only for the individual soul, but for all Jewish people and even for the universe – which all exist in a state of exile. As a result of the 'breaking of the vessels', the divine power itself and the heavenly bodies suffered from disorder and disharmony. Through *tikkun*, the universe would be restored to a state of divine order, and the Jews to their home and rightful place as the beloveds of the Divine (the true meaning of being God's 'chosen people'). Then the *Shekhinah* would be restored to her husband, the Lord, and the souls would merge back into their divine Source.

Luria's doctrine of *tikkun* was centred around the methods by which a human being – specifically, the individual Jewish devotee – can set things right within himself by freeing the individual sparks from the *kelipot*, allowing them to return to their source in the *Ayn-Sof*. This can also help to set things right within the universe at large, by re-creating the harmonious relationship between the spiritual forces that are presently out of balance. Metaphorically, the kabbalists attempted to restore the harmonious relationship between *Ze'ir Anpin* and *Nukva* (the Impatient One and the Female), permitting the divine energy to flow between them once again. Luria taught that every action done by every individual affects the relationships within the *parzufim*, the *sefirot*, and all other cosmic forces.

Despite the partisan allocation of a special place for the Jews in his cosmic scheme of things, Luria's teachings embody the vision that "the cosmos consists of a great chain of being, in which one can discern the whole structure of reality in any particular part of it."<sup>2</sup> The universal mystic principle is that the part contains the whole, for the Divine is present in every particle of creation.

The restoration (*tikkun*) of a world in disarray also takes place within the individual devotee who, through personal devotional practice, can separate his soul from attachment to the realms of duality, and reunite it with the Divine. Luria's concept of *tikkun* is also based on the principle that all things in creation, no matter how seemingly trivial, are yearning to return to the state of unity from which they fell at the time of creation. Since every person is a microcosm that contains the macrocosm, the entire cosmos exists within him. By devotional meditation, he can bring the *parzufim* back into their rightful relationship with each other, so that the divine energy can once again flow harmoniously between them. At an individual level, Luria's teaching of *tikkun* is a metaphorical description of the process of uniting the soul with its divine Source. Mystically, *tikkun* describes the process of perfection or redemption of souls, which are described metaphorically as divine sparks imprisoned in the universe of matter.

The effort to repair the disharmony and polarization in the higher realms can be understood as an externalization of the need for the individual soul to rise above the state of spiritual disharmony and alienation in which all human beings find themselves, and to attain union with the divine Being. *Tikkun* can hence be understood as a process of individual salvation and divine union.

See also: **mizvah** (►4), **parzufim** (5.2), **sefirot** (4.1), **shevirat ha-kelim** (5.2), **tikkun ha-klali** (8.5), **tikkunim** (8.5), **yihudim** (8.5), **zimzum** (5.2).

1. *Genesis* 3:21, *JB*.

2. Lawrence Fine, *Physician of the Soul*, *PSHC* p.139.

**tīramaroa** (Mo) *Lit.* a type of light, like that of a torch, seen on mountain tops; certain natural electromagnetic phenomena believed by the Māori either to be or to indicate the presence of *wairua* (spirits). Elsdon Best relates:

Tūtakangahau (a Tūhoe chief) described to me what was apparently some electrical phenomenon he saw on the summit of Maungapōhatu. It resembled a moving fire gliding along the summit of the range; one described it as being like a torch. Tūtakangahau maintained that it was a *wairua*, and that it is called *tīramaroa* by natives.

*Elsdon Best, Spiritual and Mental Concepts of the Maori, SMMB p.6*

See also: **wairua**.

**trance** A state of consciousness in which a person is unaware or seemingly unaware of their material environment, often accompanied by loss of voluntary movement, rigidity, and lack of response to external stimuli; a state of hypnosis; in spiritualism, a state in which a medium is supposedly controlled by another soul, usually one supposed to be from a heavenly realm, as a means of communicating with the dead; mystically, a state of extreme bliss or joy stemming from contact with the Divine, in which the bodily senses and the mental faculties associated with bodily existence are transcended and their functioning temporarily suspended. As a result of the withdrawal of the consciousness from the body, the body may seem to have become numb, all sensation having been withdrawn. More commonly called rapture, ecstasy,<sup>1</sup> ravishing, transport, or suspension of the faculties, ‘trance’ is actually an inaccurate word to use for mystical experience, for at that time the mystic is in a superconscious state within, not in the semi-conscious or completely unconscious condition that is normally taken to characterize a trance. It can also be said that most human beings pass all their time in a kind of trance, since preoccupations, obsessions, ambitions and habits stand in the way of a simple awareness of the present moment.

Trances or mystical raptures in which various revelations are made are reported of the apostles in *Acts*,<sup>2</sup> though the authenticity of the incidents is uncertain. Some of the prophets, oracles or sibyls of ancient Greece, as well as the biblical prophets, also gave their pronouncements while in a state of ecstatic trance or divine frenzy,<sup>3</sup> as depicted by the first-century Alexandrian Jew, Philo Judaeus, “the mind being evicted on arrival of the Holy Spirit”.<sup>4</sup> States of trance also seem to have had a significant role in *Merkavah* mysticism, scribes having been stationed near the subjects in expectation of divine revelation. Many of the apocalyptic and revelational texts of Judaism and Christianity, both gnostic and otherwise, claim to have been received in a state of revelational trance.

Among later mystics, Henry Suso, in his third-person autobiography written to comfort his sick ‘spiritual daughter’, and never intended for publication, frequently speaks of falling into a trance, by which he means being transported to a higher state of consciousness, often in the company of a “heavenly youth”:<sup>5</sup>

Once, as he sat down to take a quiet rest, he fell into a trance, and it seemed as if he were being transported into a supernatural region.

*Henry Suso, Life of the Servant 2:38, LSS p.124*

See also: **ecstasy**, **rapture**.

1. See e.g. Teresa of Ávila, *Interior Castle* 6:4, CWT2 p.286.
2. *Acts* 10:10, 11:5, 22:17.
3. E.g. *Numbers* 24:4, 16; *Isaiah* 29:10ff.; 4 *Ezra* 10:28, 12:3.
4. Philo Judaeus, *Who Is the Heir of Divine Things?* 53; cf. PCW4 pp.418–19.
5. Henry Suso, *Life of the Servant* 5, 11, 19, 20, *passim*, LSS pp.29, 39–40, 55–56, 58.

**tranquillity** (Gk. *ēremia*, *galēnē*, *hēsychia*) A state or condition of calmness or quietness; outwardly, the absence of external distractions; inwardly, either mental calmness in a general sense, or, mystically, a state of contemplation in which the mind is still, infused with divine bliss and love; hence, a state of stillness and inner mental concentration arising from and deepened by the practice of interior prayer and watchfulness over the mind and heart. In a spiritual context, *ēremia* is also translated as ‘rest’.

Understanding tranquillity in a general human sense, the Greek philosopher, Epicurus (341–270 BCE) says, “The greatest fruit of righteousness is tranquillity (*ataraxia*).”<sup>1</sup> That is, purity of heart and personal integrity leads to a mind at peace.

Mystically, the ultimate source of tranquillity is God Himself. Hence, the gnostic text, *Allogenes*, describes the transcendent God as dwelling in “stillness and silence and tranquillity and unfathomable greatness”.<sup>2</sup> For this reason, the nearer a soul is to God, the more is His peace experienced. As Philo Judaeus writes:

True stability and immutable tranquillity (*ēremia*) is that which we experience at the side of God, who Himself stands always immutable.

*Philo Judaeus, On Giants 11, PCW2 pp.468–69*

Since the mediator between God and the soul is the divine Word, Origen observes:

Tranquillity (*hēsychia*) ... comes to the soul when the Word of God (*Logos Theou*) appears to her, and sin ceases to be.

*Origen, On the Song of Songs 4:14, OSS p.242*

More generally, the soul comes closer to God by the practice of contemplative prayer. Walter Hilton writes of the sense of peace that accompanies such contemplation:

It is without words, and is accompanied by great peace and tranquillity of body and soul. One who wishes to pray in this way must have a pure heart, for the gift comes only to those who, either through long bodily and spiritual effort, or through sudden visitations of love ... have attained quietness of soul.

*Walter Hilton, Ladder of Perfection 1:32, LPH p.34*

John of the Cross also writes of the tranquil state enjoyed by the contemplating soul who is beginning to experience the inner light:

This divine tranquillity and solitude is neither informed with the divine light in all its clearness, nor does it fail in some measure to participate thereof. In this tranquillity, the understanding sees itself raised up in a new and strange way, above all natural understanding, to the divine light, much as one who, after a long sleep, opens his eyes to the light which he was not expecting. ... The soul in this estate enjoys a habitual sweetness and tranquillity which is never lost to her and never fails her.

*John of the Cross, Spiritual Canticle 14:23–24, 15:4, CWJC2 pp.83–84, 89*

This tranquillity is natural to the soul and higher mind:

Stand on guard and protect your mind (*nous*) from thoughts while you pray. Then your mind will complete its prayer, and continue in the tranquillity (*ēremia*) that is natural to it.

*Evagrius Pontikos, On Prayer 70, Philokalia; cf. PCT1 p.63*

Once a soul has established inner contact with the divine presence, tranquillity is a constant companion, as in the case of the seventeenth-century French lay brother, Brother Lawrence:

As Brother Lawrence had found such an advantage in walking in the presence of God, it was natural for him to recommend it earnestly to others; but his example was a stronger inducement than any arguments he could propose. His very countenance was edifying; such a sweet and calm devotion appearing in it, as could not but affect the beholders.

And it was observed that in the greatest hurry of business in the kitchen, he still preserved his recollection and heavenly mindedness. He was never hasty nor loitering, but did each thing in its season, with an even, uninterrupted composure and tranquillity of spirit. "The time of business," said he, "does not with me differ from the time of prayer; and in the noise and clutter of my kitchen, while several persons are at the same time calling for different things, I possess God in as great tranquillity as if I were upon my knees at the blessed sacrament."

*Practice of the Presence of God, Conversations 4, PPGL pp.22–23*

Or as John of the Cross exclaims:

Oh how happy is this soul that is ever conscious of God resting and reposing within its breast! Oh how well is it that it should withdraw from all things, flee from business, and live in boundless tranquillity.

*John of the Cross, Living Flame of Love 4:15, CWJC3 p.194*

It is, says François de Sales, simply a matter of relinquishing the individual will in favour of the Divine:

The state of tranquillity, where the will's sole activity is simply a consent to God's permissive will, . . . is the best tranquillity of all. It is free from all self-seeking.

*François de Sales, Love of God 6:11, LGFS pp.249–50*

Thomas à Kempis says the same:

If you aspire to reach this height of perfection, you must make a brave beginning. Lay the axe to the roots,<sup>3</sup> to cut out and destroy all inordinate and secret love of self and of any personal and material advantage. From this vice of inordinate self-love spring nearly all those failings that have to be completely overcome. But as soon as this evil is mastered and subdued, great peace and lasting tranquillity will follow. But few endeavour to die completely to self, and to rise wholly above it; consequently, they remain absorbed in themselves, and quite unable to rise in spirit above self.

*Thomas à Kempis, Imitation of Christ 3:53, ICTK p.168*

It is, he says, the cares of the world that disturb the mind, and hinder it from experiencing its own natural tranquillity:

If only a man could cast aside all useless anxiety and think only on divine and salutary things, how great would be his peace and

tranquillity! . . . Great tranquillity of heart is his who cares for neither praise nor blame.

*Thomas à Kempis, Imitation of Christ 1:20, 2:6, ICTK pp.51, 74*

Even concern for spiritual progress should be left in God's hands, and should not result in disturbance to one's peace of mind:

If we feel that we are not growing or advancing in devotion as well as we should wish, let us not upset ourselves, but be at peace, never traitors to tranquillity of heart. Ours is the task of tilling the garden of our souls, so we must be faithful in devoting all our attention to it; abundance of crop and harvest we are to leave in our Lord's care. The ploughman will never be taken to task for not having a good harvest; only for not tilling his fields, for not sowing his seed.

*François de Sales, Love of God 9:7, LGFS p.373*

Tranquillity is commonly described by all the world's contemplative traditions. As the Pythagorean Hieroclēs writes:

It is needful that the soul who aspires towards the conscious Mind (*Nous*) should enjoy an entire tranquillity (*galēnē*), and not be disturbed by the violence of the passions; and that all things below should be subject to her, so that she may attend quietly to contemplation of the things above.

*Hieroclēs, Golden Verses of Pythagoras 32–34; cf. HVP p.80*

It is also characteristic of eternity, as one of the Manichaean hymns maintains:

You will enter into that land [of bliss],  
and will rejoice in the gladness of that realm.  
You will abide in tranquillity [...],  
and anguish will nevermore overtake you.

*Manichaean Hymns, Huwīdagmān VIIIa:2–3; cf. MHCP pp.110–11*

See also: **hēsychia**, **stillness**.

1. Epicurus, in *Miscellanies* 6:2, WCA2 p.317.
2. *Allogenēs* 65, NHS28 pp.232–33.
3. *Matthew* 3:10; *Luke* 3:9.

**transcendence** Spiritually, a blissful state in which the soul rises above its sense of individual self, together with the body and the mental faculties associated



with bodily existence, their functioning being temporarily suspended; ascent of the soul towards God, the essential Being who is both transcendent and immanent; also called rapture, ecstasy, ravishing, transport, or suspension of the faculties.

According to Philo Judaeus, the mediator or intercessor between the soul and the divine transcendent One is the divine Word.<sup>1</sup> Philo also believes that the soul itself has the capacity to transcend all created forms, and attain a vision of the Uncreated:

This is the claim of a great and transcendent soul: to soar above created being, to pass beyond its boundaries, to hold fast to the Uncreated alone.

*Philo Judaeus, On Mating with Preliminary Studies 24;  
cf. PCW4 pp.526–27, WPJ2 p.184*

God, the Word, divine love, experiences beyond the bodily senses and beyond the cognitive faculties of the human mind – all are described by writers of various traditions as transcendent. When the soul ascends in the spirit, beyond the body, it transcends space, time, and everything that we recognize as human nature. Meister Eckhart says, “Unless you transcend world and time, you will not see God.”<sup>2</sup> And more expansively:

It is necessary for man to have trodden under foot all things that are of the earth, and whatever may becloud the understanding, so that nothing remains but what is akin to the understanding. If she works still with understanding, she is akin to it. This soul that has thus transcended all things is lifted and supported by the Holy Ghost, and borne with him into the ground (of being) whence he emanated. Indeed, he bears her into her eternal image, whence she has emanated, into that image after which the Father has shaped all things, into that image in which all things are but one, into the vastness and profundity wherein all things shall again find their end.

*Meister Eckhart, Sermons 54, STE2 p.70*

The same ideal of transcending the self and the things of this world is continually reiterated in mystical literature:

Could we renounce ourselves and all selfhood in our works, we would be able, with our naked and imageless spirit, to transcend all things.

*Jan van Ruysbroek, Sparkling Stone 8; cf. SSJR p.200*

It is achieved by divine grace:

In the higher degree of the contemplative life, a man transcends himself, but is inferior to God. He is above himself because he deliberately intends to gain by grace what he cannot attain by nature, namely to be united to God in spirit; one with Him in love and will.

*Cloud of Unknowing* 8; cf. *CU* p.50, *CUCW* p.72, *CUEU* p.87

It is an ecstatic experience:

This flowing of the soul out of itself into God is an actual ecstasy in which the soul utterly transcends the limits of its natural state, until it is blended, absorbed, and swallowed up in God. As a result, people who achieve this intensity of divine love find – after they come round from their ecstasy – that nothing this world has to offer can satisfy them.

*François de Sales, Love of God* 6:12, *LGFS* p.252

It is a companion to the opening of the inner eye:

If you transcend the flow of temporal things and detach yourself from desire for what is transient, you will not notice mundane objects or crave for the delectable things of earth. On the contrary, supernal vision will be disclosed to you, and you will contemplate celestial beauty and the blessedness of unfading realities. To the person who hankers after material things and who steepes himself in sensual pleasure, the heavens are closed, since his spiritual eyes are shrouded. But he who scorns material things, and who repudiates them, raises up his soul (*nous*) and perceives the glory of eternal realities.

*Theoliptos, On Inner Work* 8, *Philokalia*; cf. *PCT4* p.190

Such a soul is truly blessed:

Blessed is the soul (*nous*) that transcends all sensible objects and ceaselessly delights in divine beauty.

*Maximos the Confessor, On Love* 1:19, *Philokalia*; cf. *PCT2* p.55

He reaches eternity:

The completely purified soul (*nous*) is cramped by created beings, and longs to go beyond them. Blessed is he who has attained boundless infinity, transcending all that is transitory.

*Thalassios the Libyan, On Love* 55–56, *Philokalia*; cf. *PCT2* p.310

See also: **ecstasy, rapture, transcendence.**

1. E.g. Philo Judaeus, *On the Life of Moses* II:26, *Who Is the Heir of Divine Things?* 42.
2. Meister Eckhart, *Sermons* 41, *STE1* p.288.

**transformation** In general. a marked change in the nature, form, or appearance of something; conversion; spiritually, the transformation from worldly mindedness to spiritually mindedness, usually as a gradual process through prayer or spiritual practice, though sometimes hastened or precipitated by a spontaneous religious or mystical experience; the turning of a soul towards God; the gradual purification of the soul; the process of spiritual growth.

Clement of Alexandria writes that the essential transforming power is the Word:

A horse is guided by a bit, a bull is guided by a yoke, and a wild beast is caught in a noose; but man is transformed by the Word.

*Clement of Alexandria, Instructor 3:12; cf. WCA1 p.341*

Others have identified the transforming power as divine love:

The power of love is that it is all-pervading, unifying, and transforming. . . . Love transforms the lover into the beloved, making the beloved dwell within the lover. Thus, when the fire of the Holy Spirit really takes hold of the heart, it sets it wholly on fire and turns it, as it were, into flame, leading it to that state in which it is most like God. . . . Not surprisingly, the nature of such a man is transformed into a nobility of untold worth, made free and marvellous.

*Richard Rolle, Fire of Love 17, 33;*

*cf. FLML (1:17, 2:3) pp.80–81, 141, FLRR pp.101, 148*

Once transformed by love, such a soul loves all of God's creatures:

Truly, a soul transformed through love of its Creator loves all creatures, and sees how greatly He loves them. The soul rejoices at this, and at the good fortune of its neighbour, and grieves and is saddened at his evil fortune. Being kindly disposed, it presumes not to judge him or despise him when misfortune falls upon him.

*Angela of Foligno, Book of Divine Consolation 2:25; cf. BDC p.112*

Ultimately, the soul is “transformed into God”, who becomes the all-consuming passion:

One is, as it were, transformed into God; he cannot think, understand, love or remember anything that is not God; he does not see other creatures nor himself except only in God; he loves nothing except God alone; he does not even remember others or himself except in God.

*Albertus Magnus, On Cleaving to God 6; cf. in BPSG p.36*

In fact, since God is love, Francis of Assisi writes:

O Love embrace me always:  
transform me into Thyself, O Love,  
into truth, into supreme charity.

*Francis of Assisi, Canticle of Love, WFA p.129*

Because transformation *into* God is difficult for some to accept or understand, a number of mystics have spoken of transformation *in* God, though the difference may be only semantic. They say that the union of the will of God with the will of the soul is transformation *in* Him:

If the soul is to be transformed in God, it must go out from itself, . . . and draw near to God; it must forget itself because of the memory and the presence of God.

*Luis de la Palma, Camino Espiritual 3:2, CELP pp.357–58, in SSM3 p.222*

And:

The soul whose will is like to that of God, and in agreement with it, is wholly united and transformed in God supernaturally.

*Juan Bretón, Mystical Theology 2:5, MTEP fol.19v, in SSM3 p.118*

Ultimately, the soul is “wholly transported from its senses and transformed and united in God”.<sup>1</sup>

See also: **enlightenment, illumination.**

1. Antonio de Alvarado, *Arte de Bien Morir* 46, ADBM p.311, in SSM3 p.239.

**transport** Spiritually, a blissful state in which the soul is seemingly carried upwards towards the Divine to the extent that the body and the mental faculties associated with bodily existence may even be transcended and their functioning temporarily suspended; also called rapture, ecstasy, ravishing, elevation, ascent of the soul, or suspension of the faculties.

Mystic transport is commonly associated with the bliss of divine love, and finding release from the self. “No one,” says Richard Rolle, “is ever more

blessed than the man who is transported out of himself by the vehemence of his love, and who through the greatness of God's love experiences for himself the sweet song of everlasting praise."<sup>1</sup> The soul, he says, is "transported by loving desire for the taste of heaven", in which "a man overflows with inner joy, and his very thought sings as he rejoices in the warmth of his love".<sup>2</sup> The thoughts of such a person, he adds, are focused in God, rather than this world: "He who prays devoutly does not have a heart that wanders about in worldly things, but one that is transported to God in heaven."<sup>3</sup>

Walter Hilton says the same, but in his opinion, it is not a permanent state of consciousness:

I think it possible that a soul which is reformed in feeling and transported by love into the contemplation of God may be so remote from the influence of the senses and vain imagination, and temporarily so withdrawn from physical influences that it is conscious of nothing but God; but this condition is not permanent.

*Walter Hilton, Ladder of Perfection 2:11, LPH p.132*

Speaking of spiritual birth "by meditation", Bernard of Clairvaux describes how the soul can be transported from bodily awareness into blissful enjoyment of the divine Word:

The soul leaves even its bodily senses and is separated from them, so that in her awareness of the Word she is not aware of herself. This happens when the mind is enraptured by the unutterable sweetness of the Word, so that it withdraws, or rather is transported, and escapes from itself to enjoy the Word.

*Bernard of Clairvaux, On the Song of Songs 85:13, WBC4 p.209*

Johann Tauler, writing of the "Word, which is also Wisdom"<sup>4</sup> likewise describes how the soul is transported into the light of God:

When this Wisdom is united with the soul, all doubt and error and darkness utterly vanish away, and she is transported into a pure light, which is God Himself. . . . Then is God perceived in the soul by means of God.

*Johann Tauler, Sermons 13, HLT p.306*

The twelfth-century Hugh of St Victor describes such an experience:

What is that sweet thing that comes sometimes to touch me at the thought of God? It affects me with such vehemence and sweetness that I begin wholly to go out of myself and to be lifted up, whither I know not. Suddenly I am renewed and changed; it is a state of inexpressible

well-being. My consciousness rejoices, my mind becomes clearer, my heart is enflamed, my desires are satisfied. I feel myself transported into a new place, I know not where. I grasp something interiorly as if with the embrace of love. I do not know what it is, and yet I strive with all my strength to hold it, and not to lose it. I struggle deliciously to prevent myself leaving this thing which I desire to embrace forever, and I exult with ineffable intensity, as if I had at last found the goal of all my desires. I seek for nothing more. I wish for nothing more. All my aspiration is to continue at the point that I have reached.

*Hugh of Victor, De Arrha Animae, in GIP pp.108–9*

Jan van Ruysbroek observes that in such an experience, the soul automatically surrenders to God:

When a humble man is inwardly touched by the Spirit of God, and snatched up or transported into Him, he forthwith renounces his own will, and gives himself freely into the hands of God.

*Jan van Ruysbroek, Seven Steps 4, SSL p.27*

It is axiomatic in spiritual life that the soul is drawn to God because God is drawing the soul. Brother Lawrence found that when his mind was distracted from God by outer affairs, an inner prompting from the Divine would remind him of the divine presence, once again transporting him godwards:

He told me that . . . when outward business diverted him a little from the thought of God, a fresh remembrance coming from God invested his soul, and so inflamed and transported him that it was difficult for him to contain himself; that he was more united to God in his outward employments, than when he left them for devotion in retirement.

*Brother Lawrence, Practice of the Presence of God, Conversations 3, PPGL pp.15–16*

Teresa of Ávila, who has described and analysed many different states of elevated consciousness, equates rapture, ecstasy, elevation and transport,<sup>5</sup> describing them as a complete or partial suspension of the bodily senses and mental faculties of memory, intellect, and imagination.<sup>6</sup> She understands transport as the flight of the soul from the body, an experience which has taught her where her true spiritual home lies. Indeed, by contrast, the people of this world seem as if dead:

In a moment, the soul finds itself freed from this prison, and at rest. This experience, in which God bears away the spirit in these transports, and shows it such excellent things, seems to me very much like that

in which a soul leaves the body; for it finds itself in possession of all these good things in a single instant. . . .

I think, too, that this experience has been of great help to me in teaching me where our true home is, and in showing me that on earth we are but pilgrims; it is a great thing to see what is awaiting us there and to know where we are going to live. . . .

It sometimes happens that those with whom I keep company, and whose presence comforts me, are those who I know live in heaven: they, it seems to me, are the people who are really alive, while those who live on earth are so dead that it seems as if there is no one in the whole world who can be a companion to me, especially when those vehement impulses come upon me.

*Teresa of Ávila, Life 38, CWTA1 p.269*

St Teresa categorizes visions according to a classification formulated by St Augustine,<sup>7</sup> who distinguished between ‘corporeal (*L. corporale*)’, ‘imaginary (*L. spiritale*)’ and ‘intellectual (*intellectuale*)’ visions, a terminology commonly found in later Catholicism. Corporeal visions are those seen or apparently seen with the physical eyes. ‘Imaginary’ (or ‘imaginative’) visions are not the product of personal imagination, but arise when the faculty of internal mental vision is active. Likewise, ‘intellectual’ does not refer to the faculty of reason, but to a higher faculty of the mind – a pure understanding, a pure knowing or *gnōsis* that knows without reasoning. ‘Intellectual visions’ are hence inner visions in which the visualizing or image-forming faculties of the mind are inactive.

St Teresa therefore distinguishes between “imaginary” visions, in which internal images are perceived through the eyes of the mind or soul, and “intellectual” visions, in which the mind or soul perceives objects in the absence of any images. She regards “intellectual” visions as being of a higher character than “imaginary”. She also says that although the soul seems to have been transported to another world, where it learns many things by direct mystical apprehension, she – like St Paul<sup>8</sup> – remains confused as to whether or not the soul is in the body:

Turning now to this sudden transport of the spirit, it may be said to be of such a kind that the soul really seems to have left the body; on the other hand, it is clear that the person is not dead, though for a few moments he cannot even himself be sure whether or not the soul is in the body. He feels as if he has been in another world, very different from the one in which we live, and has been shown a fresh light there, so much unlike any to be found in this life that, if he had been imagining it and similar things, his whole life long, it would have been impossible for him to obtain any idea of them. In a single instant, he

is taught so many things all at once that were he to labour for years on end in trying to fit them all into his imagination and thought, he could not succeed with a thousandth part of them. This is not an intellectual, but an imaginary vision, which is seen with the eyes of the soul very much more clearly than we can ordinarily see things with the eyes of the body; and some of the revelations are communicated to it without words. If, for example, he sees any of the saints, he knows them as well as if he had spent a long time in their company.

Sometimes, in addition to the things that he sees with the eyes of the soul, in intellectual vision, others things are revealed to him – in particular, a host of angels, with their Lord; and, though he sees nothing with the eyes of the body or with the eyes of the soul, he is shown the things I am describing, and many others which are indescribable, by means of an admirable kind of knowledge. Anyone who has experience of this, and possesses more ability than I, will perhaps know how to express it; to me it seems extremely difficult. Whether or not the soul is in the body or not while all this is happening I cannot say; I would not myself swear that the soul is in the body, nor that the body is bereft of the soul.

*Teresa of Ávila, Interior Castle 6:5; cf. CWT2 pp.295–96*

See also: **ecstasy, rapture, visions.**

1. Richard Rolle, *Fire of Love* 25, *FLRR* p.121.
2. Richard Rolle, *Fire of Love* 11, *FLRR* p.77.
3. Richard Rolle, *Fire of Love* 28; cf. *FLRR* p.133.
4. See **Wisdom** (3.1).
5. Teresa of Ávila, *Life* 20:1; cf. *CWT1* p.172, *CWTA1* p.119.
6. Teresa of Ávila, *Life* 18:12–13, 20:19; cf. *CWT1* pp.162, 180, *CWTA1* pp.109–10, 126.
7. St Augustine, *De Genesi ad Litteram Libri Duodecim* 1:12.7 (n.16).
8. Cf. 2 *Corinthians* 12:1–4.

**tù** (C) *Lit.* rabbit; a Daoist symbol associated with physical longevity and hence with spiritual immortality. See **chángshēng, xiān** (7.1).

**turīya, turīya avasthā, turīya pad(a)** (S/H), **turī awasthā** (Pu) *Lit.* fourth (*turīya*) state (*avasthā*) or region (*pad*); the fourth state of consciousness that can be experienced by human beings; superconsciousness; conscious oneness with *Brahman* or *Ātman* (the supreme Self).

Four states of consciousness are described in the *Upanishads*, notably the *Māṇḍūkya* and *Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishads*, the other three states being



the waking state (*jāgrat avasthā* or *vishva*), the dream state (*svapna avasthā*, *taijasa*), and the state of dreamless sleep (*sushupti avasthā* or *prājñā*). The *Māṇḍūkya Upanishad* describes this fourth state of superconsciousness:

The fourth (*chaturtha*, i.e. *turīya*) is not that which cognizes the subjective (i.e. dreams), nor that which cognizes the objective (i.e. external things), nor that which cognizes both, nor that which is a mass of consciousness (*prajñā-naghanah*). It is neither cognition nor non-cognition. It is unseen, unrelated, incomprehensible, undefinable, inconceivable, and indescribable. It is the essence of the consciousness of the one Self. It is the cessation of all proliferation. It is all peace, all bliss, and non-dual (*advaita*). It is *Ātman*, and it has to be realized. . .

The fourth (i.e. *turīya*) is without division and without relationship; it is the cessation of phenomena; it is all good and non-dual. Thus, *Aum* is of a certainty the self. He who knows this enters the Self through the self.

*Māṇḍūkya Upanishad* 7, 12

And Gauḍapāda (c.C6th CE) comments on the *Upanishad*:

The changeless Lord is capable of destroying all miseries. The effulgent *turīya* is understood to pervade all.

*Vishva* and *taijasa* are conditioned by cause and effect. *Prājñā* is conditioned by cause alone. But neither (cause nor effect) exists in *turīya*.

*Prājñā* (as dreamless sleep) knows nothing of self or non-self, of truth or untruth. But *turīya* is ever existent and all-seeing.

Non-apprehension of duality is common to both *prājñā* and *turīya*. But *prājñā* is associated with sleep in the form of cause, and this sleep does not exist in *turīya*.

The first two (*vishva* and *taijasa*) are associated with waking and sleeping respectively; *prājñā*, with sleep bereft of dreams. The knowers of *Brahman* see neither sleep nor dreams in *turīya*.

Dreaming is wrong perception and deep sleep the non-perception of Reality. When the false knowledge of these two disappears, *turīya* is realized.

*Gauḍapāda*, *Kārikā* 1:10–15, on *Māṇḍūkya Upanishad*; cf. U2 pp.238–41

Swami Shivananda (1887–1963) compares the absolute Reality experienced in *turīya* to the relative or seeming realities of waking and dreaming:

Waking experience is like dream experience  
when judged from the absolute standpoint,  
but it has *vyāvahārika-satta* or relative reality.

Dream is *prātibhāsika-satta* or apparent reality.  
*Turīya* or *Brahman* is *pāramārthika-satta* or absolute Reality.  
 Waking reality more real than dreaming;  
*Turīya* is more real than waking.

From the point of view of *turīya*,  
 both waking and dreaming are unreal.  
 But waking, taken by itself,  
 in relation to dream experience,  
 has greater reality than dream.  
 To a certain extent,  
 as *turīya* is to waking, waking is to dream.  
 Waking is the reality behind dream;  
*Turīya* is the Reality behind waking.

Dream is no dream to the dreamer.  
 Only by one who is awake  
 is dream known to be a dream.  
 Similarly, waking appears to be real  
 to one who is still in the waking state.  
 Only to one who is in *turīya*  
 is waking devoid of reality.

*Swami Shivananda, First Lessons in Vedanta; cf. FLVS p.129*

*Turīya* has been identified by different mystics with different inner regions.  
 To Guru Nānak, it is the highest stage, beyond the attributes (*guṇas*) that  
 characterize the realms of the mind:

One who loves the three qualities (*tarai guṇ*)  
 is subject to birth and death.  
 The four *Vedas* speak only of the visible forms (*ākār*).  
 They describe and explain the three states (*awasthā*) of mind,  
 but the fourth state (*turī awasthā*), union with the Lord,  
 is known only through the true *guru* (*satgur*).

*Guru Nānak, Ādi Granth 154, AGK*

Guru Amardās also says that he has achieved this state through the help of  
 his master and the divine Name:

The three worlds (*taribhawan*) are entangled in the three *guṇas*: ...  
 the *gurmukh* (master) imparts understanding.  
 Attached to the Lord's Name (*Rām Nām*), one is emancipated:  
 go and ask the wise ones (*giānī*) about this.

O mind, renounce the three *guṇas*,  
 and focus your consciousness (*chit*) on the *chauthai* (fourth state).  
 The dear Lord abides in the mind:  
 ever sing the glorious praises of the Lord.

*Guru Amardās, Ādi Granth 603, AGK*

Swami Shiv Dayal Singh, however, describing *turīya* as it is understood by yogis, identifies it with the thousand-petalled lotus (*sahas kanwal*) at the heart of the astral region. He therefore advises going beyond this region:

*Turīya pad* is *sahas kanwal*:  
 go beyond and ascend to *trikuṭī*;  
 From there rise to *sunṇ* (void) and open the tenth door (*das duārā*),  
 and then go up to *mahā sunṇ* (great void).

*Swami Shiv Dayal Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 25:2.19–20, SBP p.213*

See also: **avasthā**.

**uccheda-diṭṭhi**, **uccheda-vāda** (Pa), **uchchheda-dṛishṭi**, **uchchheda-vāda** (S), **chad lta** (T), **duànjiàn** (C), **danken** (J) *Lit.* doctrine (*dṛishṭi*, *vāda*, *lta*, *jiàn*, *ken*) of annihilation (*uchchheda*, *chad*, *duàn*); annihilationism, nihilism; the doctrine that the self is annihilated at death and that there is therefore no rebirth or law of *karma*; contrasted with *shāshvata-dṛishṭi* (doctrine of eternalism), which is the belief that the self or soul is eternal. The two perspectives are described with some variations by the different Buddhist schools of thought, but are always depicted as incorrect views. In the Buddhist Pali texts, *uccheda-vāda* is used more or less synonymously with *natthika-vāda* (nihilist doctrine).

*Uccheda-diṭṭhi* and *shāshvata-dṛishṭi*, known as the *antagrāha-dṛishṭi* (extreme beliefs), are two of the five fundamentally wrong views or false beliefs discussed in Pali analytical literature.<sup>1</sup> The teaching of *karma* and transmigration taught by the Buddha, which includes the possibility of remembering past lives, is clearly contrary to nihilistic belief. Moreover, the doctrine of *karma* indicates that there is an accounting for all actions – that a principle of cause and effect functions in the moral as well as the material sphere. Again, this is something that is absent from nihilistic belief.

*Uchchheda-dṛishṭi* states that there is a self, but that it is annihilated at death, while *shāshvata-dṛishṭi* maintains that the self or soul is eternal and continues to transmigrate from one body to another. The Buddha observed that such extreme viewpoints misrepresent the reality, which is somewhere in the middle.<sup>2</sup> According to the Buddhist view, although some aspects of the individual do continue from one life to the next, there is no self that exists

independently of the five *skandhas* (materio-mental aspects of existence) – there is no eternal, separate soul.

See also: **mithyā-dṛishṭi**, **natthika-diṭṭhi**.

1. E.g. *Abhidharmakosha* 5:1c–d.
2. E.g. *Samyutta Nikāya* 12:15, *Kaccānagotta Sutta*, PTSS2 p.17; *Mahāvastu* 3:448, *MHVA*, *MVJ3* p.449.

**uddhāra** (S/H/Pu), **udhārdā** (Pu) *Lit.* uplift; restoration, revival, reformation; help given in a direction perceived to be advantageous, as in a career move or socially; spiritually, deliverance, liberation, salvation, as in:

The *gurmukh* by a particle of the Name (*Nām*)  
brings liberation (*udhārdā*) to millions.

*Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 608, AGT*

**‘ūlāleo** (Hw) *Lit.* spirit (*‘ula*) voice (*leo*), spirit sound; in the native Hawaiian tradition, sacred sound, supernatural voice, a voice or sound emanating from a non-physical source; hearing such a voice or sound; also, an intense emotional appeal to the gods.

According to legend, the volcano goddess Pele heard an *‘ūlāleo* as the beat of ghostly drums, which led her from Puna on the island of Hawaii to the island of Kauai.<sup>1</sup>

Sometime in the 1980s, hearing the sound of a Hawaiian nose flute, a man woke up in his bedroom in the township of Kāne‘ohe during the early morning hours before daybreak. The music was mesmerizing and he soon found himself following the sound from his bedroom into the forest behind his house. This *‘ūlāleo* led him about a quarter of a mile into the forest until, with a start, he realized he was standing in the middle of the rain forest. Swiftly, he turned and fled back home.<sup>2</sup> Literally, *kāne‘ohe* means ‘bamboo man’, and the town is named after the legend of the spirit Kāne‘ohe who entices people into the forest by playing his bamboo nose flute, much like the pied piper of Hamelin. By implication, therefore, ‘Kāne‘ohe’ also means the ‘man with the bamboo flute’.

Hawaiians would say that this kind of story causes one to have ‘chicken skin’ or ‘goose bumps’, and is an example of *‘ūlāleo*.

1. See *Nānā I Ke Kumu*, *NKKI* p.11.
2. Story related personally to the author.

**union with God, one with God** The uniting of the soul with God; the lifting of the soul to such a close and complete experience of the Divine that it is merged in Him, losing all sense of a separate existence; the state of consciousness of a soul that has completely merged in God; the highest level of spiritual enlightenment; the ultimate goal of many mystical traditions.

For Plato, union with God was the goal of the philosophical way of life. As he says, “So far as possible, man should become like God,”<sup>1</sup> and, “We ought to take flight from earth to heaven as quickly as we can; and flight is assimilation to God, so far as that is possible.”<sup>2</sup> Philosophy, as Plato understood it, begins with God and ends with God, who is the “measure of all things”.<sup>3</sup> In all their affairs, human beings are to imitate God and the divine archetype.<sup>4</sup>

For Plotinus, the goal of human life “was intimate union with God who is above all things”, adding – writes his disciple Porphyry – that during the time he knew him, his master “attained this end four times”.<sup>5</sup> Plotinus’ dying words were: “Now I will try to make what is divine in me ascend back to what is divine in the universe.”<sup>6</sup>

Christian mystics have struggled between an understanding of mystical experience and the dictates of dogma. Meister Eckhart bases his understanding of the relationship of the soul to God on the opening of John’s gospel, “The Word was with God, and the Word was God.”<sup>7</sup> In conformity with Christian doctrine, he understands the Word to be the Only-begotten Son. However, differing from the conventional Christian understanding, he maintains that creation is a continuous process – “The Father begets His Son unceasingly.” Moreover:

He has borne him (the Son) in my soul. Not only is she with Him and He equally with her, but He is in her: the Father gives birth to His Son in the soul in the very same way as He gives birth to him in eternity, and no differently. . . . Furthermore, I say, He begets me as His Son and the same Son. I say even more: not only does He beget me as His Son, but He begets me as Himself and Himself as me, and me as His being and His nature. In the inmost spring, I well up in the Holy Ghost, where there is one life, one being, and one work. All that God works is one: therefore, He begets me as His Son without any difference. . . . I am converted into Him in such a way that He makes me one with His being, not similar. By the living God, it is true that there is no distinction.

*Meister Eckhart, Sermons 65, STE2 pp.135–36*

Although Eckhart asserted that his views were not opposed to Christian doctrine, his complex metaphysics got him into difficulties with the authorities, and his statements concerning the soul’s union with God were officially condemned in a papal bull of 1329, shortly after his death.

Jan van Ruysbroek (1293–1381) expressed matters in a more orthodox manner. He writes that in union with the Divine, the soul is united with God, yet remains eternally other than Him:

Though I have said before that we are one with God, and this is taught us by the scriptures, yet now I will say that we must eternally remain other than God, and distinct from Him, and this too is taught us by the scriptures. And we must understand and feel both within us, if all is to be right with us.

*Jan van Ruysbroek, Sparkling Stone 10; cf. SSJR p.208*

He goes on to describe the soul's feeling for God as encompassing four stages. Firstly, the soul "feels the grace of God"; then, it feels itself "to be living in God". After this, follows the third stage, in which:

We feel ourselves to be one with God; for, through the transformation in God, we feel ourselves to be swallowed up in the fathomless abyss of our eternal blessedness, wherein we can nevermore find any distinction between ourselves and God. And this is our highest feeling, which we cannot experience in any other way than in the immersion in love.

*Jan van Ruysbroek, Sparkling Stone 10, SSJR p.209*

But in this state, the faculties of the mind and intellect being suspended, when the soul tries to comprehend the condition in which it finds itself, reason once again becomes active, and the soul becomes aware of its separateness from God. This, he says, is the fourth stage:

But, at the very moment in which we seek ... to comprehend what it is that we feel, we fall back into reason; and there we find a distinction and an otherness between ourselves and God, and find God outside ourselves in incomprehensibility.

*Jan van Ruysbroek, Sparkling Stone 10, SSJR p.210*

Yet in this moment, he continues, the soul, standing – as it were – in the presence of God, realizes that

God would be wholly ours and that He wills us to be wholly His. And in that same moment in which we feel that God would be wholly ours, there arises within us a gaping and eager craving which is so hungry and so deep and so empty that, even though God gave all He could give, if He gave not Himself, we should not be appeased.

*Jan van Ruysbroek, Sparkling Stone 10, SSJR p.210*

In this inner realization that its inner essence is the same as that of God, the soul begins to love and yearn for Him. It realizes that its 'union' is in fact only the taste of a drop of the Divine, and it longs to know the entire Ocean. Thus, a consciousness that there is no distinction between the soul and God, coupled with an awareness of separation from the divine Immensity,

makes our spirit burst forth in fury and in the heat and the restlessness of love. For the more we taste, the greater our craving and hunger; for the one is the cause of the other. And thus it comes about that we struggle in vain. For we feed upon His Immensity, which we cannot devour, and we yearn after His Infinity, which we cannot attain: and so we cannot enter into God nor can God enter into us, for in the untamed fury of love we are not able to renounce ourselves. And therefore the heat is so unmeasured that the exercise of love between ourselves and God flashes to and from like lightning in the sky; and yet we cannot be consumed in its ardour.

*Jan van Ruysbroek, Sparkling Stone 10; cf. SSJR pp.210–11*

According to Ruysbroek, therefore, union with God is a prelude to a divine yearning that can never be consummated or fulfilled, and in which the soul is forever aware of His infinite immensity. Nevertheless, he concludes that the sweetness experienced by the soul in this state of longing is "incomprehensible and unfathomable", and the "inward-drawing touch" of God "draws us out of ourselves, and calls us to be melted and naughted in the Unity".<sup>8</sup>

Other Christians, following the more orthodox view, have spoken of a union in which the soul is not entirely extinguished in God. Thus Bernard of Clairvaux maintains that the soul passes away from itself, like a drop of water in wine, or like iron heated in the fire, or like air irradiated by the sun; for if something of man remains that is other than God, how could God be described as all in all? Nonetheless, when the soul becomes one with God, the human "substance ... will remain, but in another form, another glory, and another power":

As a drop of water mingled in wine is seen to pass away utterly from itself, while it takes on the taste and colour of the wine; as a kindled and glowing iron becomes most like the fire, having put off its former and natural form; and as the air, when flooded with the light of the sun, is transformed into the same clarity of light, so that it seems to be not merely illumined, but the light itself: so it will needs be that all human affection in the saints will then, in some ineffable way, melt from itself, and be entirely poured over into the will of God. Otherwise, how will God be all in all, if in man somewhat remains over of man?

The substance, indeed, will remain, but in another form, another glory, and another power.

*Bernard of Clairvaux, On the Love of God 10:28, LGB pp.102–3*

John of the Cross avoids the difficulty by explaining that the soul is united to God by “participation”, rather than “in essence”.<sup>9</sup> He gives, as an example, the image of a clean window that is brightened by the sun’s light such that it appears to be transformed into that ray of light:

The ray of sunlight will transform the window, and illuminate it in such a way that it will itself seem to be a ray, and will give the same light as the ray. Although in reality the window has a nature distinct from that of the ray itself, however much it may resemble it, yet we may say that that window is a ray of the sun or is light by participation.

*John of the Cross, Ascent of Mount Carmel 2:5.6; cf. CWJCI p.77*

In the same manner, he says that a pure soul is illuminated by God and becomes God by participating in His light:

The soul is like this window, whereupon is ever beating (or, to express it better, wherein is ever dwelling) this divine light of the being of God.

*John of the Cross, Ascent of Mount Carmel 2:5.6, CWJCI pp.77–78*

Thus, union comes about when the pure soul participates in the light of God, and appears to be Him through this participation. Nevertheless, he asserts, the soul’s “natural being” remains “distinct from the being of God”:

Union comes to pass when God grants the soul this sovereign favour, that all the things of God and the soul are one in participant transformation. Then the soul seems to be God rather than a soul, and is indeed God by participation. Yet it is also true that its natural being, though thus transformed, is as distinct from the being of God as it was before, even as the window has likewise a nature distinct from that of the ray, though the ray gives it brightness.

*John of the Cross, Ascent of Mount Carmel 2:5.7; cf. CWJCI p.78*

On the other hand, and with the kind of paradox that pervades mystical literature, he says that the soul in union with God becomes that union:

It is only a soul in union with God that is capable of this profound, loving knowledge, for it is itself that union.

*John of the Cross, Ascent of Mount Carmel 2:26.5, AMCJ p.207*



St Teresa likewise admits her inability to describe the nature of “union”:

The way in which this prayer that they call union comes about, and the nature of it, I do not know how to explain. These matters are expounded in mystical theology, but I am unable to use the proper vocabulary. Neither do I understand what the mind is, or how this differs from the soul or spirit. They all seem the same to me. . . . What I do seek to explain is the feelings of the soul when it is in this divine union. It is quite clear what union is: two different things becoming one.

*Teresa of Ávila, Life 18; cf. CWT1 p.157, CWT1A1 p.106*

Many other mystics have spoken of union with the Divine, where it is evident that they are unconstrained by the need to make the description of their experience comply with doctrine. The essential goal of the third-century Plotinus, for instance, was to bring about union between the cosmic Divine and the divine in man, and he speaks freely of it. He admits, however, that for him the experience did not last, and he would again descend to the realm of reason:

Many times it has happened: awakening from the body into myself; entering into the self, leaving behind all other things; beholding a marvellous Beauty; then, more than ever, assured of communion with the loftiest part, living the best life, acquiring identity with the Divine. Established firmly within It, I have come to that supreme Reality, being established within myself above all else in the realm of the spirit (*nous*).

Then, after that sojourn in the Divine, there comes the moment of descent from the spiritual to discursive reasoning. And I ask myself how it can happen that I am now descending, and how the soul ever entered into my body when it is what it has shown itself to be by itself, even while in the body.

*Plotinus, Enneads 4:8.1; cf. PA4 pp.396–97, PEC p.200*

Even the Roman statesman and philosopher, Seneca, writes of the soul’s essential unity with God, and its desire to return to Him:

No man does wrong in attempting to regain the heights from which he once came down. And why should you not believe that something divine exists in one who is a part of God?

All this universe which encompasses us is one, and it is God. We are associates of God; we are His members. Our soul has this potential, and is carried thence if our vices do not hold it down. Just as it is the

nature of our bodies to stand erect and look up at the sky, so the soul, which may reach out as far as it likes, is framed by nature to desire equality with God. And if it makes use of its powers and stretches upward into its proper region, it is by no alien path that it struggles towards the heights. When once it has found the path, it marches boldly on, scornful of all things. It casts no backward glance at wealth, at gold or silver, things that are fully worthy of the dark in which they once lay. . . . The soul, I affirm, knows that riches are stored elsewhere than in men's heaped-up treasure houses; that it is the soul, and not the strongbox, which should be filled. It is the soul that men may set in dominion over all things, and may install as owner of the universe.

*Seneca, Epistles 92:30; cf. SEP2 pp.466–67*

See also: **God-realization.**

1. Plato, *Republic* 10:613b.
2. Plato, *Theaetetus* 176b; cf. *DP3* p.275.
3. Plato, *Laws* 4:716c.
4. Plato, *Timaeus* 28a; *Republic* 6:500e, 501b.
5. Porphyry, *Life of Plotinus* 23, *PEC* p.vi.
6. Porphyry, *Life of Plotinus* 2; cf. *PPH* p.45.
7. *John* 1:1.
8. Jan van Ruysbroek, *Sparkling Stone* 10, *SSJR* pp.211–12.
9. John of the Cross, *Ascent of Mount Carmel* 2:5.5, *CWJC1* p.77.

**unity of all things** (Lakota) Like many spiritual and mystical traditions, Native Americans perceive a fundamental unity at the heart of everything.

Speaking of an extended visionary experience he had when he was only nine years old, Black Elk of the Lakota Sioux describes how he saw the unity of all life, as one mighty flowering tree that shelters all the children of the one Mother and Father of all:

Then a Voice said: “Behold this day, for it is yours to make. Now you shall stand upon the centre of the earth to see, for there they are taking you.”

I was still on my bay horse, and once more I felt the riders of the west, the north, the east, the south, behind me in formation, as before, and we were going east. I looked ahead and saw the mountains there with rocks and forests on them, and from the mountains flashed all colours upward to the heavens. Then I was standing on the highest mountain of them all, and round about beneath me was the whole hoop of the world. And while I stood there I saw more than I can tell,

and I understood more than I saw; for I was seeing in a sacred manner the shapes of all things in the spirit, and the shape of all shapes as they must live together like one being. And I saw that the sacred hoop of my people was one of many hoops that made one circle, wide as daylight and as starlight, and in the centre grew one mighty flowering tree to shelter all the children of one mother and one father. And I saw that it was holy.

*Black Elk, Black Elk Speaks, BES pp.42–43*

Frank Fools Crow (c.1890–1989) describes how perception of that unity, which he equates with love, is obscured from the majority of people by the metal debris or “junk” of self-centred emotions. The extract is part of a sequence of questions and answers. Here, Fools Crow has been asked what must be done to become open to an influx of spiritual power:

A. First cleanse (purify) ourselves ritually with smoke and water, and then let *Wakan-Tanka* make us into clean bones (*i.e.* hollow bones, pure channels) to work in and through for the sake of others. You have seen pipes that are clogged with junk or mineral deposits. People are like that, except that the deposits are the things that we put in *Wakan-Tanka*’s way when we ask Him to help us.

Q. What kinds of things do we put in the way?

A. Doubt, guilt, reluctance, fear, selfishness, wanting to tell *Wakan-Tanka* how and when it ought to be done.

Q. You say we must do this for the sake of others. What about doing it for our own sakes? Is it wrong to ask for help with personal needs?

A. Of course we will ask for personal help, but our reason must be that we want to be helped so that we can help others. There must be nothing selfish in this. *Wakan-Tanka*’s wish is that we do for others, and we are taken care of when others do for us. It is a community approach that provides a strong and united group whose voice is louder and more likely to be heard by *Wakan-Tanka* (Great Spirit) and His helpers than a single voice would be. This approach gives us more personal satisfaction than if we just try to help ourselves.

I heard a song on the radio that included the words, “I did it my way.” This is nothing to be proud of, and the person who follows that way of life cannot be happy for very long. Those who live for one another learn that love is the bond of perfect unity. Perfect unity is when you put other people ahead of yourself. Then when they put you ahead of themselves, there is perfect love – perfect unity – and no one has to worry about equality any more. You have something much better. Besides, you can never have equality, because the person you want to be equal with is not standing still

and waiting for you to catch up. By the time you get there he or she will be somewhere else.

*Thomas Mails, Fools Crow, FCWM p.39*

**unmanī** (S/H), **unmanī dhyān** (H), **unman man** (Pu) *Lit.* inward-turning or ascended mind (*unmanī*); upward mind contemplation (*dhyān*); meditation in which the direction of the mind (*man*, *manas*) is turned upward; inner contemplation, inner concentration; the state in which the mind is directed and focused upward or inward; the state of consciousness in which the mind is focused at the eye centre or goes beyond; a transcendental or superconscious state of the higher mind or even above the mind; expanded mind, opened mind; also found as *unmanī-bhāva* and *unmanī-avasthā*, both meaning ‘state of *unmanī*’. The variant spelling *unmani* is common in some Hindi dialects.

Although *manī* is understood to be from the same root as *man* (mind), the etymological root of the prefix (*un-*) is less certain. In a mundane sense, *unmanī* means to be ‘out of one’s mind’, to be perplexed, excited or mentally absent, all of which are states of mental disturbance. In mystical literature, *unmanī* refers to a transcendental state of consciousness, above that of normal mental functioning.<sup>1</sup>

The *Haṭha Yoga Pradīpikā* equates *unmanī* with a number of other similar terms,<sup>2</sup> although these terms appear in other contexts with varying shades of meaning:

*Rāja yoga*, *samādhi* (absorption), *unmanī*, *manonmanī* (absence of mind), *amaratva* (immortality), *laya* (absorption), *Tattva* (Truth), *śhūnya-ashūnya* (void-nonvoid), *paramapada* (supreme state), *a-manaska* (without mind), *advaita* (non-dual), *nirālamba* (self-sufficient), *nirañjana* (spotless), *jīvanmukti* (liberation while living), *sahaja* (tranquillity), and *turīya* (fourth, transcendence) are all synonymous terms.

*Haṭha Yoga Pradīpikā* 4:3–4; cf. *HPSD* p.128

In yogic literature, *unmanī* is generally understood to be a transcendent state of mind in which normal mental function is suspended and consciousness is free of mental activity. It also refers to the state beyond the mind, when the *ātman* (soul, self) attains union with *Brahman*, beyond all duality:

There are two things that lead to bondage and liberation: a sense of ‘mine’ and the absence of a sense of ‘mine’. Through mineness, the soul is bound; through an absence of mineness, it is liberated. When the mind rises to the state of *unmanī*, then there is no sense of duality. When the *unmanī* state is reached, then the highest state has been attained. Then, wherever the mind goes, it remains in the highest state.

*Paingala Upanishad* 4:19–21; cf. *PU* p.923

Everything in this world, animate and inanimate, is of the mind. When the mind attains the state of *unmanī*, duality (*dvaita*) is no longer experienced. The distinction of knower and the thing known being lost, the mind goes into absorption or is dissolved. When the mind is dissolved, then there is only *Kaivalya* (the Absolute)... In the *unmanī avasthā*, the body becomes like a log of wood, and not even the sound of the conch or *dundubhi* (a kind of large kettle drum) is heard.

*Haṭha Yoga Pradīpikā* 4:61–62, 106; cf. *HPSD* pp.152–53

It is said that *unmanī* can be attained by various means:

Merging the sound in the light and focusing midway between and a little above the eyebrows (*bhrū-madhye*) ... brings about the state of *unmanī*, which causes the destruction of the mind... Then one attains the state of *unmanī*, and falls into the *yoga* 'sleep'. To one who attains this *yoga* 'sleep', time does not exist.

*Shāṇḍilya Upanishad* 1:34–35; cf. *TMU* p.139

In my opinion, contemplation between the eyebrows (*bhrū-dhyāna*) leads to the transcendent state of mind (*unmanī*) in a short time. It is an easy method, even for those of modest intellect, for attaining the state of *rāja yoga*. The *laya* (absorption) arising from *nāda* soon results in bliss.

*Haṭha Yoga Pradīpikā* 4:80; cf. *HPSD* p.162, *HYPM* p.577

Speaking of the stillness of body and mind when breathing is automatically suspended (one of the goals of *prāṇāyāma*), the *Haṭha Yoga Pradīpikā* also observes:

When the flow of *prāṇa* is stabilized, the breath stops spontaneously (*kevala kumbhaka*), and the *unmanī* state arises of its own accord.

*Haṭha Yoga Pradīpikā* 1:41; cf. *HPSD* p.144

And:

With perfect concentration, the gaze fixed on the light a little above the eyebrows (*bhrū*), ... the mind is joined (to the *prāṇa*, life energy), and one soon attains the state of *unmanī* (transcendent mind).

*Haṭha Yoga Pradīpikā* 4:39; cf. *HPSD* p.143

Speaking of various yogic practices, the *Maṇḍala-brāhmaṇa Upanishad* continues:

One hears the sound of *Praṇava* (*Aum*) in which the *manas* (mind) becomes absorbed... Rising above day and night through the

annihilation of sound and time, he becomes one with *Brahman*, through the all-encompassing *jñāna* (knowledge) and attainment of the state of *unmanī* (transcendent mind). Through the state of *unmanī*, he becomes *amanaska* (without *manas*)....

This *amanaska* is a great secret. By knowing this, one becomes someone who has fulfilled his (human) duty. One should look upon it as *Paramātman* (supreme Self, supreme Soul)... Seeing *Parabrahman* (supreme *Brahman*) in his own *ātman* (self, soul) as the Lord of all, the immeasurable, the birthless, the auspicious, the supreme *ākāsha* (heaven), the supportless, the one without a second,...he should raise himself above the dualities of existence and nonexistence. And knowing the experience of the *unmanī* of his *manas*, he then attains the state of *Parabrahman*, which is as motionless as a lamp in a windless place, having reached the ocean of the bliss of *Brahman* by means of the river of *amanaska-yoga*, through the destruction of all his senses. Then he resembles a dry tree.

Having lost all (thought of) the universe through the disappearance of growth, sleep, disease, expiration and inspiration, his body being always still, he comes to possess a supreme quiescence, being devoid of the movements of his *manas*, and becomes absorbed in *Paramātman*. The destruction of *manas* takes place after the destruction of all the senses, like a cow's udder (that shrivels up) after the milk has been drawn. It is this that is *amanaska*....

When his *manas* is immersed in *ākāsha* (*i.e.* the highest heaven) and he becomes all-encompassing, and when he attains the *unmanī* state having abandoned all his senses, then he has conquered all sorrows and impurities through undivided bliss, having attained the fruits of *kaivalya* (enlightenment), ripened through the merit gathered in all his previous lives.

*Maṇḍala-brāhmaṇa Upanishad 2:2, 3:1–2; cf. TMU pp.188, 191*

*Unmanī* is used in a general sense to indicate the higher stages of inner concentration when the attention is completely cut off from the external world and is firmly fixed within. Because the primary purpose of meditation is to withdraw the attention from without, turning it within to ascend higher and higher until union with God is attained, the term has been used by Indian *sants* (saints). *Unmanī dhyān* begins at the eye centre and culminates in the bliss of divine union. Ravidās says:

The *satguru* has shown me the way.  
The sins of past lives were all destroyed,  
and my agonies came to an end.

Searching outside, I had wasted my life,  
 but through transcendent contemplation (*unmani dhyān*),  
 the Lord's unstruck divine Music sounded within,  
 and by the grace of the *guru*,  
 the inaccessible wisdom was attained.

*Ravidās, Vāṇī 54, SGRV p.92; cf. GRPS p.100*

And Nāmdev writes:

There is no peace except in the Name of the Lord:  
 meditate on it with one-pointed attention.  
 Experience the state of *unmanī*,  
 where the Lord's love flows;  
 And you will see yourself  
 in every particle of the creation.

*Nāmdev, Gāthā 2030, SNG p.769*

1. For some of this discussion, see Les Morgan, *Croaking Frogs, CFGS* pp.300–10.
2. Cf. *Gheraṇḍa Saṃhitā* 7:17.

**upacāra samādhi** (Pa) *Lit.* threshold (*upacāra*) concentration (*samādhi*); access, proximity, or neighbourhood concentration; in Buddhism, the second of three degrees of concentration leading up to the attainment of the first *jhāna* (absorption); a term introduced in the *Abhidhamma* (analytical systematization of the Pali *suttas*).

The three degrees of concentration are: preparatory concentration (*pari-kamma samādhi*), followed by threshold concentration (*upacāra samādhi*), which leads to attainment or fixed concentration (*appanā samādhi*), by means of which the practitioner enters the first *jhāna*. In *upacāra samādhi*, the original, often external, object of meditation appears or is visualized in the mind as a luminous representational or counterpart image (*paṭibhāga nimitta*). Further concentration on this internal image leads to fixed concentration (*appanā samādhi*) and entry into the first *jhāna*. The meditation in which *upacāra samādhi* prevails is known as *upacāra bhāvanā*; likewise, the meditation in which full concentration is attained is known as *appanā bhāvanā*.

These three *samādhis* are states of consciousness belonging to *kāmaloka*, the three realms of sensual desire (the hellish regions, this world, and the lower heavenly regions) that lie below the *jhānas*. Attainment of the first *jhāna* heralds entry to *rūpaloka* (world of forms, images, or archetypes). There are four *jhānas* or degrees of absorption in *rūpaloka*, followed by a further four of an even greater degree of subtlety in *arūpaloka*. *Rūpaloka*

and *arūpaloka* would seem to correspond to the astral and higher realms of Western terminology. In his *Visuddhimagga*, Buddhaghosa (C5th CE) describes forty meditation objects or themes (*kammaṭṭhāna*) that may be used to attain *upacāra samādhi*, *appanā samādhi*, and the eight *jhānas*.<sup>1</sup>

Starting with the preparatory exercises, *parikamma samādhi* is the result of concentration upon a preliminary object or image. One of the initial exercises in Buddhist *Theravāda* meditation is concentration upon a *kaṣiṇa* – a simple external object such as a blue disc – with the intention of forming a mental image (*nimitta*) of it. This image is then completely internalized and used as a focus for further meditation. The initial perception and mental image of the object is known as a *parikamma nimitta* (preliminary or preparatory image). For instance, taking a blue circle fixed upon the wall as a *kaṣiṇa*, the practitioner gazes at it with full concentration, repeating the words ‘blue, blue’, until the things around the disc seem to fade away and the disc itself even appears to be increasingly mental in nature. This preparatory concentration is called *parikamma samādhi*, and the preparatory exercises are known as *parikamma bhāvanā* (preparatory meditation).

With increased concentration, whether or not the eyes are closed, a mental image as an exact likeness of the *kaṣiṇa* persists within the mind and can be maintained by focused concentration. This is known as an acquired image (*uggaha nimitta*),

which, though apparently seen by means of our physical eyes, is nevertheless produced and perceived only by our mind, independently of the sense activity of the eye. As soon as this mentally produced image becomes steady and vanishes no longer, but remains safely fixed in the mind, we should (according to the *Visuddhimagga*)<sup>2</sup> move to another place and there continue our exercise. In fixing our mental eye more and more upon the mentally produced image or light, it becomes continually steadier and brighter, till at last it may assume the appearance of the bright morning star, or something similar.

*Nyanatiloka Mahāthera, Fundamentals of Buddhism 4, FBFL p.35*

This kind of clear and luminous image is known as a *paṭibhāga nimitta* (representational or counterpart image), and the concentration attained is called *upacāra samādhi*. By determined concentration on the *paṭibhāga nimitta*, the practitioner ultimately achieves *appanā samādhi* and enters the first *jhāna*, which is the *jhāna* experienced in the lowest level of *rūpaloka*.

The exercise may be simple to describe, but the most immediate obstacles that face a practitioner are the primary mental disturbances and distractions identified as the five hindrances (*pañca-nīvaraṇa*). These are: sensory desire (*kāmacchanda*) of any kind in the field of the five senses; ill will (*vyāpāda*) of any sort; sloth and torpor (*thīna-middha*); restlessness and anxiety



(*uddhacca-kukkucca*); and wavering doubt or lack of conviction (*vicikicchā*). While these are active, the mind remains constantly distracted, and finds it difficult to focus on even the preliminary *parikamma samādhi*. For entering *upacāra samādhi*, the five hindrances must have been at least temporarily put aside, although there is no guarantee that they will not return again after the period of meditation is over. The Thai Buddhist reformist, Buddhadasa Bhikkhu (1906–1993), puts it simply:

Genuine *samādhi* or concentration is of two kinds: *upacāra samādhi* and *appanā samādhi*. *Upacāra samādhi* is, literally, neighbourhood (or threshold) concentration, a level of concentration approaching very near *jhāna*, almost attaining it, in fact. *Appanā samādhi* is full concentration, concentration that is firm, concentration at the level of absorption (*jhāna*). The concentration of the beginning stages such as counting and connecting (breaths) is not yet true *samādhi*. It may be called preparatory concentration (*parikamma samādhi*). . . .

Comparing neighbourhood concentration and full concentration will help us understand them both better. Let us speak first about their effects. Neighbourhood concentration is the state of being in the immediate vicinity (*upacāra-bhūmi*) of *jhāna*, approaching very close to *jhāna*, but still falling short of it; while full concentration is the state of having arrived, the actual attainment of *jhāna*. . . .

In terms of the progress of the practice, neighbourhood concentration is attained as soon as the hindrances disappear. Freedom from hindrances is the only condition. Full concentration, on the other hand, is attained only with the full arising of the *jhāna* factors (*jhānanga*), in particular one-pointedness. Note that the falling away of the hindrances and the appearance of the *jhāna* factors do not necessarily take place simultaneously. Another difference between these two forms of concentration is that neighbourhood concentration is unsteady. It collapses and rises again like a child learning to walk, because the *jhāna* factors are sometimes present and sometimes not, arising and ceasing, arising and ceasing repeatedly. By contrast, in full concentration all the *jhāna* factors are present constantly, steadily, so that this form of concentration is stable, resembling the walking and standing of a grown-up person rather than the stumbling of the child learning to walk.

*Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, Ānāpānasati, AMBB pp.216–18*

Likewise, Nyanatiloka Mahāthera (*b.* Anton Gueth, 1878–1957):

Already during this stage all mental hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*) have, at least temporarily, disappeared and do not arise. No sensual lust (*kāmacchanda*) arises in such a state. No ill will (*vyāpāda*) can

irritate the mind. All mental stiffness and dullness (*thīna-middha*) is overcome. No restlessness and anxiety (*uddhacca-kukkucca*) and no wavering doubt and scepticism (*vicikicchā*) can any more divert the mind. As long as there is a possibility for the arising of these five mental hindrances, so long there can be no lasting tranquillity of the mind.

*Nyanatiloka Mahāthera, Fundamentals of Buddhism 4, FBFL p.35*

The *jhānangas* (*jhāna* factors) are five in number: *vitakka* (initial application of thought to the meditation theme or object), *vicāra* (sustained, focused thought upon the meditation subject), *pīti* (ecstasy, rapture), *sukha* (bliss), and *ekaggatā* (one-pointedness). On entry to the first *jhāna*, all five are present. Having reached the degree of concentration that has led to entry into the first *jhāna*, the intention of the meditator is to apply and sustain focus (*vitakka-vicāra*) on the meditation theme. Gradually, this mental effort gives way to rapture (*pīti*), in which there is bliss but also some excitement or agitation. This is the second *jhāna*. As concentration deepens, the agitation of ecstasy subsides, leaving only bliss (*sukha*). This is the third *jhāna*. Then, with further concentration, the mind finds tranquillity (*upekkhā*) in complete one-pointedness (*ekaggatā*). This is the fourth *jhāna*. But these four *jhānas* are approached, firstly by *parikamma samādhi* and then by *upacāra samādhi*, which gives way to *appanā samādhi* and entry to the first *jhāna*.

The forty different objects for meditation described in the *Abhidhamma* texts are classified into six categories and summarized by Buddhaghosa in his *Visuddhimagga*. Through their practice, the three *samādhis* and the eight *jhānas* are attained. Mentioning a few of these practices, the Malaysian monk Venerable Sujiva describes the experience of *upacāra samādhi* in a *Dhamma* talk given in 1993. He begins by speaking specifically of *samatha-jhāna* (tranquillity meditation), and goes on to say that the term *upacāra samādhi* covers a range of deeply concentrated states of mind:

First let us look at the general meaning of *samatha* concentration and the way it happens. . . . *Samatha-jhāna* can be divided into two types. One is *upacāra-jhāna* (access absorption) or *upacāra samādhi* (access concentration), the other is *appanā-jhāna* or *appanā samādhi* (fixed concentration). In this usage, *jhāna* and *samādhi* mean the same thing. *Appanā samādhi* means ‘fixed concentration’, which means that the mind becomes unified with the object (of meditation). *Upacāra* means ‘access’, which implies being close to fixed concentration.

We have to understand that the range of experience covered by the term *upacāra samādhi* is very wide. And it differs according to the various objects (used for meditation). Generally, we can say that a person has reached *upacāra samādhi* when the five hindrances have been inhibited. This means that concentration has reached a level where greed, anger, sloth and torpor, worry and restlessness, and

doubts do not arise. When the concentration has reached the level where the five hindrances have been pushed aside (although they may return after coming out of meditation), one can be said to have attained initial access concentration. . . .

But when the hindrances have been put aside and inhibited, it does not mean that the deepest form of access concentration has already been achieved. At that time, now and then, you may still hear (external) sounds coming and going. At that point you may still have some idea of your bodily form. For example, if you are watching the in- and out-breaths and you come to a point where the hindrances are absent and the mind is very clear and calm – at that stage you will still have some idea of your bodily form. And when (external) sounds are present, you will still hear them, although they may not be loud. Sometimes they may seem to be very loud and sometimes very distant. This is a lower stage of *upacāra samādhi*.

But one can go further. When you say access concentration is close to absorption, it does not mean that access concentration is weak. It can be very strong. Take for example a person who is watching the in- and out-breaths; or is mentally chanting, “*Iti pi so Bhagavā-  
arahaṃ sammā-sambuddho* (He is the Blessed One, a worthy one, an enlightened one);” or doing *mettā* (lovingkindness), spreading lovingkindness to somebody. After spending some time developing the practice with mindfulness, with *mettā*, with awareness, his mind becomes increasingly calm. As it becomes calmer and calmer, he forgets everything else. His mind becomes very soft, very quiet, and very concentrated. At times it becomes very light. And he forgets about the body; he is not aware of his body at all; nor does he hear any sounds. He just knows that his mind is very still and quiet, focused either on the breath, or on sending lovingkindness to someone, or concentrated on some visualization – a light for example (*i.e.* a *nimitta*, an internal image). His mind is not moving. His mind is very still, very quiet; he cannot hear anything, and he does not know where he is. But he does still know that he is concentrated on the meditation object. And if he wants to think, he can; if he does not want to think, he can do that too. Often, in this stage, the mind is like one who is floating. It is like being half-asleep; but it is not really sleep. This still constitutes *upacāra samādhi*, access concentration.

*Venerable Sujiva, Access and Fixed Concentration; cf. AFCS*

The Venerable Sujiva continues by describing the different ways in which *upacāra samādhi* can be experienced:

As you progress and the concentration deepens, any movement in the (internalized image of the) object ceases, and it becomes very still, . . .

very bright. At that point the mind will approach a stage in which it is extremely clear and extremely bright. When that happens, excitement can sometimes arise and concentration is broken. At that point, too, the mind can manifest what we call the *paṭibhāga nimitta*, the mirror-like image (also called the representational or counterpart image), which is highly purified. This is now much closer to blissful absorption, to the first *jhāna*. Yet it is still not absorption (*i.e.* the first *jhāna*)...

*Upacāra samādhi* can last a long time. You can sit for hours. It seems that people can sit for days; but it is still only *upacāra samādhi*. In *samatha samādhi*, you get very peaceful and very good experiences. There is no doubt about that. One can never say anything bad about *samatha* meditation. One can only praise *samatha* meditation. But it has to be properly learnt, otherwise some problems can arise.

At this level of *upacāra samādhi*, because it is so quiet and peaceful, so happy and joyful, many things can happen. And because it is not as fixed as *appanā* (fixed concentration), it can sometimes lapse. Being so peaceful, it can lapse into sleep. For example, once when I was doing *samatha* meditation, the mind was very quiet and I knew I was sitting. I thought I had sat for five minutes only and had been aware all the time, but, when I turned to look at the clock, it was already a few hours later. Either the sitting had been very peaceful or I had fallen asleep. At times it is so peaceful and the mind is so subtle that there is not much difference between being aware or not being aware. You feel as if you had closed your eyes for a short while only, yet in fact a few hours have passed. In this type of *samādhi*, it is very easy to slip off into sleep, and you actually go into very, very deep sleep. And when you come out, if you are not careful, you may even think that it was *nibbāna* (*S. nirvāṇa*). Because you may say that it was cessation altogether; it was like you had gone to a void – there was nothing there. Or, you may think it was the *jhāna*, the first absorption. But actually it was sleep. There is nothing wrong with sleep. It is only when you start getting attached to it that problems arise.

Besides sleep, there are other things that can happen. For example, at times there may be very strong joy that makes you feel like you are floating. Lots of joy and lightness may envelop your mind and body and make them seem to disappear. When you come back to your senses you may recall, “Oh! I’ve been in a very peaceful and blissful state.” That is not *jhāna*. It is still a kind of *upacāra*, a kind of being completely enveloped in joy or happiness. Again, if you’re not careful, you can get attached to it as *nibbāna* or as *jhāna*. There is nothing wrong with that bliss or that peacefulness. It is only when the attachment arises that problems follow. And it is very easy to get attached to such things.

In this access concentration, for certain people and with certain types of meditation, a lot of *nimittas* (images, visions) can arise. There arise what we call ‘visions’ or ‘visualized images’. They may be things that you have seen before (*i.e.* previous experiences). They may be just nonsense. They may be, as they say, things from past lives. They may be just fantasies. But usually such visions are quite clear because the mind is calm and peaceful. Especially in the beginning, they are very clear and nice, and some of them may even be real. But inexperienced persons cannot differentiate very well since the concentration is not really deep yet. Small, subtle defilements quickly arise with visual images. And if you start to get attached to them, thinking: “I’ve psychic powers;” “I’ve divine eyes;” “I can see my past lives;” “In my past life, I was king of India;” “In my past life, I was emperor of China” – then problems can arise. If you do not get attached, then they are just mental images that arise. There is nothing wrong with that; they will come and go. They may just be impressions from anywhere. But once attachment or fear arises, these images will not stop; they will keep on continuing and continuing. Until finally you get complete hallucinations. Therefore, if you are into *samatha* meditation, you are not encouraged to get into this at all until you have complete mastery over the mind, until you are one hundred percent sure whether these images are real or not. From this you can see that *upacāra samādhi* is not just a simple experience, but actually covers a range of experiences.

*Venerable Sujiva, Access and Fixed Concentration; cf. AFCS*

Venerable Sujiva also adds that the term *upacāra samādhi* is sometimes used for levels of concentration experienced as the practitioner approaches each *jhāna* – each successive *upacāra samādhi* being more subtle or refined than the one before:

In the process of developing concentration, after reaching *upacāra samādhi* where the hindrances have been put aside, one still has to go much further in concentration before attaining the actual absorption that we call *appanā-jhāna*. With certain objects (used as focuses in meditation), you can see very clearly that they become finer and finer. Take for example, *upacāra samādhi*, access concentration just before going into the first *jhāna*, and *upacāra samādhi* just before going into the second *jhāna*. Both are *upacāra samādhi*, but they are experienced differently. And when you go to the third and fourth *upacāra samādhis*, just before going into third and fourth *jhānas* respectively, it is again different. The *samādhi* is finer and more still. The (image of the meditation) object also becomes much

finer. So there are actually different levels of *upacāra samādhi* that can be experienced.

*Venerable Sujiva, Access and Fixed Concentration; cf. AFCS*

Other authorities, incidentally, maintain that there are no intermediate stages of *upacāra samādhi* between one *jhāna* and the next.<sup>3</sup> It is not unusual, however, to find differences in the way the inner journey is described and experienced. Since there are no road signs on the inner journey telling a person where they are or how far they have travelled, it is always difficult to compare one person's experiences with those of another. Moreover, experiences are always related to the nature, content and cultural background of a person's individual mind, and what one person experiences may be quite different from another, just like experiences in everyday human life.

Other Buddhist monks and teachers have described similar experiences. The Thai *Theravāda* monk and reformist Ajahn Chah (1918–1992) also speaks about the three increasing degrees of concentration:

If you practise meditation focusing on an object to calm the mind and reach a level of calm where the mind is firm in *samādhi*, but there is still some mental movement occurring, that is known as *upacāra samādhi*. In *upacāra samādhi*, the mind can still move around. This movement takes place within certain limits, the mind doesn't move beyond them. The boundaries within which the mind can move are determined by the firmness and stability of concentration. The experience is as if you alternate between a state of calm and a certain amount of mental activity. The mind is calm some of the time and active for the rest. Within that activity, there is still a certain level of calm and concentration that persists, but the mind is not completely still or immovable. It is still thinking a little and wandering about. It's like you are wandering around inside your own home. You wander around within the limits of your concentration, without losing awareness and moving outdoors, away from the meditation object. The movement of the mind stays within the bounds of wholesome (*kusala*) mental states. It doesn't get caught into any mental proliferation based on unwholesome (*akusala*) mental states. . . . During the time it is concentrated, the mind only experiences wholesome mental states and periodically settles down to become completely still and one-pointed on its object.

So the mind still experiences some movement, circling around its object. It can still wander. It might wander around within the confines set by the level of concentration, but no real harm arises from this movement because the mind is calm in *samādhi*. This is how the development of the mind proceeds in the course of practice.

In *appanā samādhi*, the mind calms down and is stilled to a level where it is at its most subtle and skilful. Even if you experience sense impingement from the outside, such as sounds and physical sensations, it remains external and is unable to disturb the mind. You might hear a sound, but it won't distract your concentration. There is the hearing of the sound, but the experience is as if you don't hear anything. There is awareness of the impingement, but it's as if you are not aware. This is because you let go. The mind lets go automatically. Concentration is so deep and firm that you let go of attachment to sense impingement quite naturally. The mind can absorb into this state for long periods. Having stayed inside for an appropriate amount of time, it then withdraws (comes out again).

*Ajahn Chah, Teachings of Ajahn Chah, TACD pp.453–54*

Buddhist meditation practice can take the head or the heart as its focus for concentration, depending upon the school, the teacher, and so on. Sometimes, the switch of the attention happens spontaneously and can be a surprise to the practitioner. Bhikkhu Khantipalo (born Lawrence Mills, 1932), a *Theravāda* monk who disrobed after thirty years in order to pursue an interest in the *Mahāyāna* tradition, writes of this experience and of the nature and dangers of *upacāra* or “neighbourhood concentration”:

Neighbourhood (threshold) concentration is experience of a state of tranquillity near to *jhāna*. It sometimes happens that a meditator has the experience of an instant of profound peace, a fraction of a second when the mind goes down into the heart. The usual startled reaction is to think “What was that!” This instant is a momentary experience of neighbourhood concentration or it could even be a *jhāna*. As the practice deepens, such flashes may lengthen in time and become more familiar, so that anxiety is not aroused. And it does appear at those times that one's ‘centre’ is no longer up in the head, where all the senses are, but deep in one's heart.

The experience is not necessarily peaceful in that visions may arise at this time. They may be very pleasant and delightful ones – of the *devas* (deities), for instance, and their heavenly worlds; or fearful ones – of one's own body decaying. In the first case, the danger is that one becomes fascinated with the new worlds which have opened up, their colours and forms and their inhabitants – there is no end to this distraction. Some who experience only this are quite content to play around with these images and do not realize that they are trapped by their own clinging and cannot make any further progress. The fearful visions, of decay, disease and death, can have worse results for timid minds. Such people have been known to go mad after seeing these



things. The importance of a good teacher to direct one's meditation is again clear.

Neighbourhood concentration is like unexplored country, it is not the familiar world of five-door consciousness and the mental reflections on this. What will be found in this unknown region depends largely on what sort of *kamma* one has made. Some people's experience of it is extensive and their minds like to explore this area. Others do not have the kammic tendencies which keep them to this concentration and proceed straight to *jhāna*, which is also known as full concentration.

*Bhikkhu Khantipalo, Calm and Insight, CIMK pp.51–52*

See also: **appanā samādhi**, **jhāna** (8.5), **khaṇika samādhi**, **parikamma samādhi**.

1. Buddhaghosa, *Visuddhimagga* 3–11, *PTSV* pp.84–372.
2. Buddhaghosa, *Visuddhimagga* 4:30, *PTSV* p.125.
3. Nyanatiloka Mahāthera, *Guide through the Abhidhamma Piṭaka*, *GAPN* p.109.

**upayog(a)** (S/H) *Lit.* employment, use, application; an act or activity that leads to a desired objective; in Jainism, the active aspect of consciousness (*chaitanya*) by means of which something is understood or perceived; the innate drive, urge, energy or impulse that leads to the awareness and understanding of things, which manifests as knowledge (*jñāna*) and perception (*darshana*), and which is the basis of experience; the capacity to acquire knowledge; hence, the cognition that arises from knowledge and perception.

*Upayoga* is that which identifies a living organism and distinguishes it from inert matter; it is the means by which a *jīva* perceives and knows. These faculties are common to all sentient beings, human or otherwise. *Upayoga* is sometimes depicted as a counterpart to *labdhi* (faculty), which in this context refers to the subtle, psychical, mental or inner power or faculty of a material sense organ. It is this subtle, inner aspect by which objects are consciously recognized, which permits the outer, bodily sense organ to convey information to consciousness.

According to Jain epistemology, a *jīva* (embodied soul) is said to consist of *chaitanya* and *upayoga* – pure consciousness and the drive to perceive and understand. Perception (*darshana*) without any analysis comes first, followed by the desire to acquire knowledge (*jñāna*) of whatever is perceived. A *jīva* first perceives something, and then tries to make sense of it. The process is so rapid and automatic that it may seem as if the two are simultaneous. Nevertheless, there is always a reaction time between perception and the assimilation and recognition of the nature of the perception. A further time



lag also exists between the conscious recognition of a perception and any response or reaction that may be decided upon.

*Upayoga* is therefore said to be of two kinds: *anākāra* or *nirākāra* (formless, undifferentiated) and *sākāra* (with form, differentiated, definitive experience). *Anākāra-upayoga* is *darshana-upayoga*, perception or *darshana* of something without any cogitation thereon. It is perception *per se*, without differentiating or determining the attributes *etc.* of whatever is being perceived. *Sākāra-upayoga* is *jñāna-upayoga*, grasping and understanding the different attributes of the object being perceived. It is coming to know everything about that object (as far as humanly possible).

The two aspects of *upayoga* are heavily influenced by *karma* or, in Jain terms, by the presence of the karmic matter that envelops the soul. The heavier the karmic burden or the thicker the karmic veil, the less is a *jīva* able to perceive and understand things correctly, without the veil of illusion.

*Upayoga* appears in various expressions. These include *dhyāna* (meditation) *upayoga*, which is meditation or concentration of the cognitive processes upon one particular thing, in order to know everything about it; and *shuddha* (pure) *upayoga*, which is cognition untainted by any passion, *i.e.* pure conscious awareness, and hence experience of the bliss of the pure self in *kevala-darshana* (perfect perception) and *kevala-jñāna* (perfect knowledge).

Jain teachers and commentators, ancient and modern, have put forward various viewpoints around the basic theme of human knowledge and perception. *Darshana* and *jñāna* have themselves been further analysed and subdivided.

See also: **darshana, jñāna.**

**upekkhā** (Pa), **upekshā** (S), **btang snyoms** (T), **shě** (C), **sha** (J) *Lit.* looking (*ikkhati*) upon (*upa*); seeing impartially; in Buddhism, looking at things from a neutral perspective, with a balanced and objective mind; equanimity, mental equipoise, impartiality, even-mindedness, neutrality, non-reactivity, disinterestedness, freedom from bias; remaining unaffected by either pleasure or pain; a calm neutrality, rich with lovingkindness for everybody irrespective of status, relationship, race, creed, gender, *etc.*; in the context of meditation, a balanced, peaceful, and blissful state of consciousness that feels neither attraction nor aversion to anything; used synonymously with *tatra-majjhataṭṭā* ('there in the middleness', 'standing in the middle of all this').

Depending on the context, *upekkhā* is either a human attribute or a more mystical state of inwardly focused being, the human attribute being a natural expression of the meditative state. In the latter sense, it is associated with *citta-ekaggatā* (one-pointedness of mind), these being the essential characteristics of the fourth *jhāna* (state of meditative absorption).

*Upekkhā* appears in a number of lists of mental states, attributes, and functions. It is one of the eleven virtuous *cetasikas* (mental factors) or aspects of the mind-body complex according to the analysis of *Abhidhamma* texts (systematic analysis of the *suttas*), where it is further subdivided into ten forms. It is the last of the seven enlightenment factors (*bojjhāṅgas*) that lead to enlightenment. Of the ten perfections (*pāramīs*) described in the *Abhidhamma* and commentarial literature, it is the tenth to be developed by a seeker of enlightenment.

*Upekkhā* is also the ninth of the ten imperfections of insight (*vipassanūpakkilesa*). These are intermediate states that in themselves are not negative, but become so if a meditator becomes attached to them and stops progressing towards the goal. The twentieth-century Thai teacher Ajahn Lee Dhammadharo explains that the negative aspect of *upekkhā* is “indifference, not wanting to meet with anything, be aware of anything, think about anything, or figure anything out”. It assumes that “You’ve let go completely. Actually, though, this is a misunderstanding.”<sup>1</sup>

*Upekkhā* is also the last of the four *brahmavihāras* (divine dwellings), frequently mentioned in the Pali *suttas*, and listed in the *Abhidhamma* as four out of the forty classical meditation subjects (*kammaṭṭhāna*). In this context, *upekkhā* gives stability and balance to the other three *brahmavihāras*, which are lovingkindness (*mettā*), compassion (*karuṇā*), and happiness at the welfare of others (*muditā*). *Upekkhā* restrains the over-emotional reaction arising from lovingkindness and compassion, that can otherwise lead to well-meaning, but unconsidered and often fruitless, efforts to help others. Thanissaro Bhikkhu (b.1949) explains:

Equanimity (*upekkhā*) is a different emotion, in that it acts as an aid to and a check on the other three. When you encounter suffering that you can’t stop no matter how hard you try, you need equanimity to avoid creating additional suffering and to channel your energies to areas where you *can* be of help. In this way, equanimity isn’t cold-hearted or indifferent. It simply makes your goodwill more focused and effective.

Thanissaro Bhikkhu, *Head & Heart Together*, HHTT

The Burmese monk Sayadaw U Thittila (1896–1997) adds:

It is the most difficult and most essential of all the ten *pāramī*, especially for the layman who has to move in an ill-balanced world with fluctuating fortunes, where slights and insults are the common lot of humanity. Likewise are praise and blame, loss and gain; but under all such vicissitudes of life a *bodhisatta* (seeker of enlightenment) tries to stand unmoved, like firm rock, exercising perfect equanimity. In times of happiness and in times of adversity, amidst praise and amidst blame, he is evenly balanced.

Sayadaw U Thittila, *Essential Themes*, ETBL p.127

The German-born *Theravāda* monk Nyanaponika Thera (1901–1994) elaborates:

Equanimity (*upekkhā*) is a perfect, unshakable balance of mind, rooted in insight. Looking at the world around us, and looking into our own heart, we see clearly how difficult it is to attain and maintain balance of mind.

Looking into life we notice how it continually moves between contrasts: rise and fall, success and failure, loss and gain, honour and blame. We feel how our heart responds to all this happiness and sorrow, delight and despair, disappointment and satisfaction, hope and fear. These waves of emotion carry us up and fling us down; and no sooner do we find rest, than we are in the power of a new wave again. How can we expect to get a footing on the crest of the waves? How shall we erect the building of our lives in the midst of this ever restless ocean of existence, if not on the island of equanimity?

A world where that little share of happiness allotted to beings is mostly secured after many disappointments, failures and defeats; a world where only the courage to start anew, again and again, promises success; a world where scanty joy grows amidst sickness, separation and death; a world where beings who were a short while ago connected with us by sympathetic joy, are at the next moment in want of our compassion – such a world needs equanimity.

But the kind of equanimity required has to be based on vigilant presence of mind, not on indifferent dullness. It has to be the result of hard, deliberate training, not the casual outcome of a passing mood. But equanimity would not deserve its name if it had to be produced by exertion again and again. In such a case it would surely be weakened and finally defeated by the vicissitudes of life. True equanimity, however, should be able to meet all these severe tests and to regenerate its strength from sources within. It will possess this power of resistance and self-renewal only if it is rooted in insight.

*Nyanaponika Thera, Four Sublime States, FSSN pp.20–21*

*Upekkhā* is an imperturbable state of mind that arises from deep insight into the impermanence (*anicca*) and absence of a fixed identity (*anattā*) that is inherent in all beings and all things. It is founded on love and caring rather than unfeeling indifference to the suffering of others. It does not judge, because it understands that all beings are subject to their *kamma*, originating in past births, and are constrained to act in the way they do. It is a giver to all, unhindered by likes and dislikes. It is mental balance disconnected from attachment, free to help and love unencumbered by emotions and self-interest. It is love and compassion without discrimination and partiality. It is free of ‘I’, ‘mine’, and ‘self’. When there is no self, there is no biased discrimination,

no sense of possessiveness, no sense of gain or loss, of winner or loser. There is giving, but no giver; doing, but no doer.

See also: **brahmavihāra** (8.5), **vipassanūpakilesa**.

1. Ajahn Lee Dhammadharo, *Basic Themes, BTAD* p.128.

**vāchak gyān** (H/Pu) *Lit.* verbal (*vāchak*) knowledge (*gyān*); book learning, intellectual philosophy; theoretical, academic and bookish knowledge as opposed to the mystic knowledge or gnosis that results from inner experience and spiritual practice.

See also: **vāchaka jñānī** (7.1).

**vaishvānara** (S) *Lit.* universal (*vishva*) to men (*nara*); common to all men; in *Vedānta*, waking consciousness, the one who experiences waking consciousness, the perceiver in the waking state, the *ātman* (soul, self) when experiencing waking consciousness of the gross physical world common to all human beings; the first of the four states of consciousness commonly described in *Vedānta*, the others being dreaming (*svapna*), deep sleep (*sushupti* or *prājñā*), and superconsciousness (*turīya*); also called *vishva* (universal) and *jāgrat avasthā* (waking state).

In the earliest Vedic literature, such as the *Ṛig Veda*, *Vaishvānara* is an epithet of *Agni*,<sup>1</sup> the deity of fire (*agni*), because fire is universally useful to all human beings, helping in their cooking, keeping warm, worship, and so on. The term thus came to mean the sun or fire, *per se*,<sup>2</sup> and in the minds of many ancient writers, it probably meant both the deity and fire itself. In ancient thinking, *vaishvānara* was also the fire in the stomach that causes digestion.<sup>3</sup> In later literature, since the fire of the sun is the source of light and energy, *vaishvānara* also came to mean both the *prāṇa* (vital energy) and the Self (*Ātman*),<sup>4</sup> which are universally present within all beings. In the *Māṇḍūkya Upanishad*, *vaishvānara* is said to have the “waking (*jāgrat*) state” as its sphere of action,<sup>5</sup> since this state is common to all human beings. The *Vedāntasāra* explains that *vaishvānara*, as the waking state, is the consciousness associated with all gross physical bodies, collectively.<sup>6</sup>

The term also appears in a variety of expressions such as *agni vaishvānara* (fire that is common to all men) and *Ātman vaishvānara* (universal Self, the Self that is common to all men).<sup>7</sup>

In his commentary on the *Brahma Sūtras*, the ninth-century philosopher-mystic Shankara acknowledges the confusion caused by these multiple meanings:

The word *vaishvānara* ... is a common term for the (digestive) heat in the stomach, the element called fire, and the deity of fire (*Agni*), as also the use of the word Self denoting both the embodied self and the supreme Lord. So the doubt arises as to which of these meanings should be accepted and which rejected in the present context.

*Shankara, on Brahma Sūtras 1:2.7; cf. BSBS p.147*

According to a story related in the *Chhāndogya Upanishad*, a group of *brāhmaṇs* (priests), together with the eldest son of Manu, ask King Ashvapati to teach them about *Ātman vaishvānara*, the universal Self. The king asks each of them in turn, “On what do you meditate as the Self (*Ātman*)?” They reply, respectively, that they worship heaven, sun, air, space, water, and earth. Ashvapati responds that *Ātman vaishvānara* indeed has the sun for His eye, air for His *prāṇa*, *ākāsha* (space) for His body, water as His bladder, and earth as His feet, but that the universal Self is more than just these. He is, in fact, the supreme Self Itself. The king goes on to explain that the *agnihotra* sacrifice (sacrifice to *Agni*), such as *brāhmaṇs* perform, is only fruitful when performed by someone who has true knowledge of the universal Self (*Ātman vaishvānara*).<sup>8</sup>

See also: **avasthā, jāgrata avasthā, turīya.**

1. *E.g. Ṛig Veda, passim.*
2. *E.g. Ṛig Veda 10:88.12.*
3. *E.g. Brihadāranyaka Upanishad 5:9; Bhagavad Gītā 15:14.*
4. *E.g. Chhāndogya Upanishad 5:11.1.*
5. *Māṇḍūkya Upanishad 3, 9.*
6. Sadānanda, *Vedāntasāra* 111, 116.
7. *E.g. Chhāndogya Upanishad 5:11–18.*
8. *Chhāndogya Upanishad 5:1–24.*

**vibhrama** (S) *Lit.* wandering (*bhrama*) about (*vi-*); restlessness, unsteadiness, agitation, disturbance; vagueness, indefiniteness, uncertainty, delusion, bewilderment; in Jain philosophy, one of the three fallacies that lead away from correct or right knowledge (*samyag-jñāna*), these three being *vimoha* (delusion), *saṃshaya* (doubt, uncertainty), and *vibhrama*.<sup>1</sup> In a Jain context, *vimoha* and its synonym *viparyaya* are commonly understood to mean ‘perverse’ or ‘incorrect belief’. *Vibhrama* is the agitation of a restless and scattered mind, continually astray from its internal focus, and consequently unable to understand things as they actually are.

1. See *e.g.* Nemichandra, *Dravya Saṃgraha* 42; Kundakunda, *Niyamasāra* 51.

**vichāra** (S), **vicāra** (Pa), **dp̣yod pa** (T), **sī** (C), **shi** (J) *Lit.* pondering, consideration, reflection, scrutiny, deliberation, evaluation, investigation, examination; discursive thought, the sustained exercise of the mind upon something; the morally neutral function of the mind that distinguishes the further aspects of something after it has been initially registered; one of a number of mental factors (S. *chaitta*, *chaitasika*; Pa. *cetasika*) or aspects of the mind that have been identified in the literature associated with the *Abhidhamma* (analytical systematization of the Pali *suttas*), and further elaborated in later schools of Buddhist thought such as *Yogācāra* and the *Vaibhāshika* school of *Sarvāstivāda*; in *Mahāyāna* Buddhism, used more or less synonymously with *vikalpa*, which is the mental faculty of dividing and differentiating things, of imagination and the formation of concepts, judgments, and opinions concerning things.

In the Pali Buddhist *suttas* as well as in the later *Abhidhamma* and allied texts, *vicāra* is used in both general and specific senses. When the mind comes into contact with something or conceives some idea, it may become interested in it and start thinking more about that thing. The initial interest is *vitakka* and the further thinking is *vicāra*. *Vitakka* is aiming the mind at something; *vicāra* is holding onto that something. *Vitakka*, for instance, is an initial thought concerning someone; *vicāra* is thinking about the person in detail. This is the general sense.

*Vicāra* is used in a specific sense for the application of sustained, focused concentration upon a subject or theme of meditation (*kammaṭṭhāna*). *Vicāra* follows on from *vitakka*, which is the application of initial concentration upon an object or theme of meditation. *Vicāra* is said in the *Abhidhamma* texts to be a specific antidote to wavering doubt (*vicikicchā*),<sup>1</sup> one of the five hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*) to be overcome before entry to the first *jhāna* (stage of contemplative absorption) is possible.

In Pali texts, *vicāra* is commonly twinned with *vitakka* as *vitakka-vicāra* (C. *xún sī*, J. *jinshi*). *Vitakka* is the initial interest in something, and in its general sense *vitakka-vicāra* simply means ‘thinking and pondering’<sup>2</sup> or ‘reflection and discursive thinking’. In a specific sense, however, *vitakka-vicāra* comprises the first two of the five factors (*jhānangas*) that a meditator works through when passing through the four lower *jhānas*. In this context, *vitakka-vicāra* refers to the initial and sustained application of thought that are present in the first *jhāna*. On entry to the second *jhāna*, both *vitakka* and *vicāra* are transcended as an even deeper, concentration without effort is attained.

The five *jhānangas* that are progressively refined and then transcended are: *vitakka*, *vicāra*, *pīti* (rapture), *sukha* (bliss) and *ekaggatā* (one-pointedness), which is closely associated with equanimity (*upekkhā*) or great inner peace. Although the Pali *suttas* speak of four *jhānas*, the *Abhidhamma* texts also speak of them as five by allocating separate *jhānas* to the surmounting

of *vitakka* and *vicāra*. In many ways, this kind of detailed analysis can be misleading, because the practical reality does not necessarily conform to careful categorization. The Thai *Theravāda* monk, Ajahn Chah (1918–1992) explains:

We don't have to call it first *jhāna*, second *jhāna*, third *jhāna*, and so on; let's just call it 'a peaceful mind'. As the mind becomes progressively calmer, it will dispense with *vitakka* and *vicāra*, leaving only rapture (*pīti*) and happiness (*sukha*, bliss). Why does the mind discard *vitakka* and *vicāra*? This is because, as the mind becomes more refined, the activities of *vitakka* and *vicāra* are too coarse to remain. At this stage, as the mind leaves off *vitakka* and *vicāra*, feelings of great rapture can arise, tears may gush out. But as the *samādhi* deepens, rapture, too, is discarded, leaving only happiness (bliss) and one-pointedness (*ekaggatā*), until finally even happiness (bliss) goes and the mind reaches its greatest refinement. There are only equanimity (*upekkhā*) and one-pointedness, all else has been left behind. The mind stands unmoving.

*Ajahn Chah, Teachings of Ajahn Chah, TACD p.105*

The *Mahāyāna* Buddhist philosopher Nāgārjuna (c.C2nd–3rd) similarly explains how both *vitakka* (S. *vitarka*) and *vicāra* (S. *vichāra*) can be either a help or a hindrance. Even good thoughts must ultimately be transcended:

*Vitarka* and *vichāra* cause disturbance (*vicakshuḥkaraṇa*) in concentration. . . . Even if they are good (*kushala*), they are enemies to meditative stability and it is difficult to escape from them. Some even say that a mind furnished with *vitarka* and *vichāra* is not concentrated. This is why the Buddha stated that concentration with *vitarka* and *vichāra* lacks a firm foundation.

When the power of *vitarka* and *vichāra* is reduced, it is possible to attain concentration. *Vitarka* and *vichāra* can produce concentration, but they are also able to destroy it. They are like the wind (*vāyu*), which is able to bring rain (*varsha*) and is also able to blow it away. Good *vitarka* and *vicāra* . . . can produce the first *dhyāna* (Pa. *jhāna*); but when the first *dhyāna* has been attained, and great joy (*mahāprīti*) is experienced as a result of the (focused) *vitarka* and *vichāra*, then the mind can become distracted (*vikshipta*) and lose concentration.

*Nāgārjuna, Mahāprajñāpāramitā Śāstra 38:2.1.2, T25 1509:234a–b; cf. TVW3 pp.1219–20*

Nāgārjuna also depicts the ascent to the second *dhyāna*, leaving *vitarka* and *vicāra* behind:



Just as heavy rain can penetrate  
 the whirlwind of dust that hides the sun –  
 So can *dhyāna* dissipate  
 the wind of *vitarka-vichāra* that distracts the mind...

Avoiding desires and bad *dharma*s,  
 a person enters into the first *dhyāna*...  
 Avoiding the flames of lust,  
 he is endowed with clear cool absorption –  
 Happy like a person who, tormented by the heat,  
 enters a cold pool.

Like a poor man who has found a treasure,  
*vitarka* of a great joyfulness moves his mind.  
 He analyses it: this is *vicāra*.  
 This is how he enters the first *dhyāna*.  
 He knows that *vitarka* and *vichāra* disturb his mind,  
 although good, he must separate himself from them –  
 For it is only on a calm sea  
 that the movement of the waves is not seen.

When a very weary man  
 lies down to sleep in peace,  
 any call to him,  
 greatly disturbs his mind.  
 In the same way, for the man absorbed in *dhyāna*,  
*vitarka* and *vicāra* are a torment.  
 That is why, avoiding *vitarka* and *vicāra*, he succeeds in entering  
 the sphere of unified consciousness (the second *dhyāna*).

*Nāgārjuna, Mahāprajñāpāramitā Śāstra* 28:1, 3,  
*T25 1509:180c, 185c; cf. TVW2 pp.763–64, 794–95*

In Indian philosophy, notably *Advaita Vedānta* and related schools of *yoga*, *vichāra* refers to enquiry into or investigation concerning the nature of existence and ultimate Reality (*Brahman*) – hence, such terms as *ātmavichāra* (investigation of the Self), *avasthā-traya-vichāra* (investigation into the three states of existence, *viz.* waking, dreaming, and deep sleep), and *brahmavichāra* (investigation of *Brahman*). A seeker is encouraged to ask such questions as: “Who am I?” “Where did the universe come from?” “What is it?” “How came death and birth?”, and so on.<sup>3</sup> Having posed a similar list of questions, a student of Shankara adds: “Thus enquire, leaving aside the entire world which is comparable to a dream, and is essenceless.”<sup>4</sup>



See also: **jhāna** (8.5), **jhānanga**, **vitakka**.

1. E.g. Nārada Mahāthera, on *Abhidhammattha Sangaha* 1:7, ASAM p.70.
2. E.g. *Majjhima Nikāya* 19, *Dvedhāvitakka Sutta*, PTSD2 p.116, MDBB pp.208–9, *passim*.
3. E.g. *Annapūrṇa Upanishad* 1:40, cf. in PU p.73 (n.5); *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsishṭha* 5:7, cf. TYVL p.198.
4. Surendra, in *Bhaja Govindam* 23, HSTM p.68.

**videh(a)** (S/H), **bideh** (H/Pu) *Lit.* without (*vi*) body (*deha*); bodiless, incorporeal; independent of the body, released from the body; hence *videhī* – someone with a loose connection to the body, who experiences disembodied states of consciousness and transcendence from the body, such as a mystic, a clairvoyant, or a psychic; also, the name of a land and people, now in northern Bihar, and the kingdom of the wise King Janaka, who figures in the *Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad*, the *Rāmāyaṇa*, and other Hindu texts. In respect of his spiritual attainment, King Janaka was also called *Videha*, free of the body.

Kabīr points out that the mystic Word (*Shabd*) is independent of the material body:

Everyone speaks of “*Shabd*, *Shabd*”:  
but that *Shabd* is independent of the body (*bideh*).  
It comes not from the tongue:  
it has to be seen and experienced.

*Kabīr, Sākhī Sangrah, Shabd kā ang 5, KSS p.92*

See also: **mahāvideha**, **videhamukti**.

**videhamukti**, **videhakaivalya** (S/H) *Lit.* bodiless (*videha*) liberation (*mukti*, *kaivalya*); incorporeal *mukti*; liberation attained at the time of leaving the body; liberation upon release from the body at death; also called *parinirvāṇa*; contrasted with *jīvanmukti* – liberation while still living in the body; hence, *videhamukta* – one who attains such liberation.

Buddhism, Jainism and the various schools of Indian philosophy speak of two kinds of *mukti* – *jīvanmukti* and *videhamukti* – and the ideal of *jīvanmukti* is not universally accepted. Buddhism, Jainism, *Sāṃkhya*, *yoga*, Shankara, Vijñānabhikṣu and Vallabha all accept the possibility that although a person who has attained *jīvanmukti* continues to live out his human life according to his *karma*, yet he remains pure and unsullied by it.

Two schools of Indian philosophy, *Nyāya* and *Vaisheshika*, do not recognize the ideal of *jīvanmukti*. Some scholars, however – basing their thinking on Vātsyāyana's *Nyāya Sūtra Bhāṣya*<sup>1</sup> – have pointed out that while *jīvanmukti* is not formally recognized and liberation is believed to come only after death, *Nyāya* does admit a stage corresponding to *jīvanmukti*, in which a person has shed delusion and attained enlightenment, and wherein none of his actions are tainted with selfishness.<sup>2</sup>

In Jain philosophy, *videhamukti* – which is seen as the highest liberation – is attained upon death. During life, the soul passes through the fourteen *guṇasthānas* (stages of development), in the last of which, *ayogi-kevali guṇasthāna* (oneness without bondage stage), the remaining *karma* that keeps the soul in the body is destroyed, and the soul attains liberation. It is then no longer bound by *karma* and the body, and free from the risk of further incarnations. This stage is said to last only momentarily, after which the soul rises to its heavenly abode at the pinnacle of creation, and dwells there for all eternity. This state is known as *videhamukti* or *nirvāṇa*.

*Videhamukti* is generally understood to be the final and complete liberation attained upon death, when the *karma* of destiny, which keeps the soul in the body, has all been gone through. “*Videhamukti* arises from the destruction of *prārabdha karma*,”<sup>3</sup> says the *Muktikā Upanishad*; and likewise the *Yogakūṇḍalī Upanishad*:

Whichever *muni* (silent holy man) who continues to meditate thus, till he attains his sleep, till he reaches his death, should be known as a *jīvanmukta*; he is blessed and has discharged his duty (as a human being). Shedding his *jīvanmukta* state when his body finally wears out, he enters upon the state of *videhamukti*, even as wind becomes motionless. Then there remains only That, which is soundless, intangible, odourless, formless, deathless, which is the eternal Essence, which has neither beginning nor end, which is greater than the great, and which is permanent, spotless, and without decay.

*Yogakūṇḍalī Upanishad* 3:33–35; cf. TMU p.208, YU pp.277–78

The *Tejobindu Upanishad*, on the other hand, portrays both kinds of liberation as attainable during human life. In essence, in *jīvanmukti* the *ātman* (self, soul) is aware of its oneness with *Brahman*, while in *videhamukti* even that awareness of oneness has dissolved in the absolute unity of *Brahman*.<sup>4</sup> The distinction mirrors the difference between *savikalpa samādhi* and *nirvikalpa samādhi*. Both describe absorption in *Brahman*; but in the former, the distinction of knower, knowledge and the object of knowledge remains, while in the latter, even that is eliminated.

Indian saints (*sants*) have said that, as a divine principle, the journey towards God must begin in human life, but – with the guidance of a saint – it

can be continued after death. Were this not so, it is doubtful whether more than a handful of souls would have ever escaped the wheel of birth and death, and *mukti* would be no more than an unattainable ideal. The only proviso mentioned by the saints is that the soul must receive the help of a perfect saint while still living in the body.

See also: **jīvanmukta** (7.1), **jīvanmukti**, **videhamukta** (7.1).

1. Vātsyāyana, *Nyāya Sūtra Bhāṣya* 4:2.2.
2. M. Hiriyanna, *Outlines of Indian Philosophy*, OIP pp.19, 266; Swami Prabhavananda, *Spiritual Heritage of India*, SHI p.207.
3. *Muktikā Upanishad* 2:1.1; cf. TMU p.5.
4. *Tejobindu Upanishad* 4:1–81.

**vidyā** (S/H/Pu), **vijjā** (Pa), **rig pa**, **rig ma** (T), **míng** (C), **myō** (J) *Lit.* knowledge; hence, learning, scholarship, science, philosophy, doctrine; intellectual knowledge, temporal learning, materialistic knowledge; also, mystic knowledge or awareness, gnosis; a term for which the specific meaning depends on the context; from the Sanskrit, *vid* (to know); appears in expressions such as *brahmavidyā* (knowledge of *Brahman*), *ātmavidyā* (knowledge of the self, self-realization), *adhyātma-vidyā* (knowledge of the self, science of the soul), *bhūta-vidyā* (knowledge of spirits and demons), *nakshatra-vidyā* (science of the stars, astrology), *kshatra-vidyā* (science of rulership, military knowledge), *rasa vidyā* (science of essences, alchemy), *pañchāgni-vidyā* (doctrine of the five fires, concerning the processes of the universe, life, and death), *Purusha-vidyā* (knowledge of the supreme Being), and *trayī-vidyā* (threefold knowledge, sacred knowledge, the three *Vedas*, viz. *Ṛig*, *Yajur*, and *Sāma Vedas*).<sup>1</sup>

In Buddhism, *trividyā* (Pa. *tevijjā*) refers to the threefold knowledge, viz.: the memory of past births; the opening of the divine eye, giving rise to knowledge of the future; and understanding the origin of suffering, and the way to eliminate it.

In tantric Buddhism and Jainism, occult powers, magical incantations and spells (*mantras*) and *mudrās* (gestures) are also known as *vidyās*, which are particularly associated with a group of sixteen tantric deities (*vidyādevīs*, *mahāvidyās*).

In Indian philosophy, there are said to be fourteen *vidyās*: the four *Vedas*, the six *Vedāngas*, the *Purāṇas*, the *Mīmāṃsā*, the *Tarka* or *Nyāya*, and *Dharma* (Law). *Vidyā* is contrasted with *avidyā*, ignorance, commonly taken in the sense of nescience or spiritual ignorance. *Avidyā* is unawareness or unconsciousness of one's own innate spirituality, of the treasure that lies within and of the omnipresence of God.

A distinction is made, in Indian tradition, between lower knowledge (*aparāvidyā*) and higher knowledge (*parāvidyā*). All knowledge and skill concerning terrestrial and celestial matters obtained through various arts, sciences, technology, law, medicine and even scriptural learning are included in what is called *aparāvidyā*. Only that knowledge whereby the Imperishable is known and immortality or salvation attained is called *parāvidyā*.

The *Upanishads* lay repeated emphasis on *parāvidyā*, which is regarded as the true *vidyā*. The *Muṇḍaka Upanishad* says:

Two kinds of knowledge are to be known:  
 the higher (*parā*) and the lower (*aparā*).  
 Of these, the lower is the *Ṛig Veda*,  
 the *Yajur Veda*, the *Sāma Veda*, the *Atharva Veda*,  
 phonetics, religious observances, grammar,  
 etymology, metrics, astrology, and so on;  
 And the higher (*parā*) is that  
 by which the Imperishable is realized.

*Muṇḍaka Upanishad 1:1.4–5*

The *Kena* and *Īsha Upanishads* speak of *vidyā* as the higher or mystic knowledge whereby the soul realizes its innate immortality:

By *vidyā* one attains immortality.

*Kena Upanishad 2:4*

One attains immortality by means of *vidyā*.

*Īsha Upanishad 11*

Adhering to the Upanishadic distinction between lower and higher knowledge, Shankara points out that while the former can lead to worldly prosperity, the latter leads to salvation:

This division of knowledge into lower (*aparā*) and higher (*parā*) is made according to the respective fruits – prosperity and salvation.

*Shankara, on Brahma Sūtras 1:2.6; cf. BSBS p.141*

Nāgārjuna, an exponent of the *Mādhyamika* or *Shūnyavāda* school of Buddhism also refers to this distinction:

There are two truths on which Buddha's teaching of *Dharma* depends. One is the empirical truth (*saṃvṛiti-satya*) meant for ordinary people, and the other is the absolute Truth (*paramārtha-satya*). Those who

do not know the distinction between these two kinds of truth cannot grasp the profound mystery of Buddha's teachings.

*Nāgārjuna, Mūlamadhyamaka Kārikā 24:8–9*

From the spiritual perspective, intellectual and bookish learning or scholarship is not only inadequate, but can actually become a hindrance, because it tends to make a person conceited and opinionated, thinking himself superior to others. Hence, Swami Shiv Dayal Singh says:

O knowledge (*vidyā*), you are indeed a great ignorance (*avidyā*),  
you do not know the value of the saints (*santon*).

*Swami Shiv Dayal Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 24:3.1, SBP p.209*

See also: **aparāvidyā**, **avidyā** (6.2), **parāvidyā**, **rig pa**.

1. For some of these, see lists in *Chhāndogya Upanishad* 7:1.2, 4, 7:2.1, 7:7.1; *Bṛihadāranyaka Upanishad* 2:4.10, 4:1.2, 4:5.11.

**vigilance** In a spiritual context, alertness, attentiveness, watchfulness, mindfulness; keeping a constant watch on what one is thinking, doing, and saying; guarding the mind from impure thoughts and negativity; in spiritual contexts, used more or less synonymously with watchfulness.

Vigilance is the starting point for the spiritual life. If a person does not keep watch over the content of his mind, there can be little spiritual progress. Hence, the nineteenth-century Orthodox bishop, Ignatius Brianchaninov, says that it is “spiritual vigilance which kindles the spiritual fire”.<sup>1</sup> The way he describes it, vigilance includes complete attentiveness to prayer, by which he means the Jesus prayer. “The practice of the prayer of Jesus,” he writes, “by its very nature requires unbroken vigilance over oneself.”<sup>2</sup> He also says:

Spiritual vigilance or sobriety is a spiritual art which completely delivers a man, with the help of God, from sinful actions, and passionate thoughts and words, when fervently practised for a considerable time. It is silence of heart; it is guarding of the mind; it is attention to oneself without any other thought.

*Ignatius Brianchaninov, On the Prayer of Jesus 8, OPJ pp.67–68*

The fourteenth-century author of the *Cloud of Unknowing* observes that in seeking the purity required for the contemplative life, a person must observe vigilance at all times, carefully appraising all thoughts that arise in the mind, lest they lead from small (“venial”) sins to the greater (“mortal”):

I would like you to weigh up each thought and each desire as it arises, and to work diligently at destroying its first appearance, with its opportunity for sin. For I warn you that he who pays no regard to or sets little store by initial thoughts, even if to him they are not sinful, will eventually grow careless about venial sin. It is impossible to avoid venial sin in this mortal life, but carelessness concerning venial sin should always be avoided by all true disciples of perfection. For should they not, it is no wonder that they soon go on to mortal sin.

*Cloud of Unknowing 11; cf. CU pp.54–55, CUCW p.76, CUEU p.96*

The same author, whose ultimate focus is on developing the simple awareness of the Divine, writes that constant vigilance is required to keep the mind in this awareness. Even the most sublime thoughts concerning God are a hindrance at the time of contemplative prayer:

Therefore, you must reject the activity of your thoughts that will inevitably arise when you set about this work; for unless you conquer them, they will surely conquer you. When you most desire to dwell in this darkness, and think that there is nothing in your mind but only God, when you look honestly, you will find that your mind is not occupied with the darkness, but in consideration of something less than God. And if this be so, then it is sure that this thing has temporarily got the better of you, and is between you and your God. Therefore, make a resolution to reject all such thoughts, however holy or delightful they may be.

*Cloud of Unknowing 9; cf. CU pp.51–52, CUCW p.73, CUEU p.89*

Since such spiritual vigilance is an entirely internal practice, no one else need know about it. Walter Hilton therefore highlights the difference between “outward show” and actual “inward vigilance”:

Any man or woman who neglects to maintain inward vigilance, and only makes an outward show of holiness in dress, speech, and behaviour is a wretched creature. For they watch the doings of other people and criticize their faults, imagining themselves to be something when in reality they are nothing. In this way they deceive themselves.<sup>3</sup>

*Walter Hilton, Ladder of Perfection 1:1, LPH p.1*

See also: **attentiveness, watchfulness.**

1. Ignatius Brianchaninov, *On the Prayer of Jesus* 8, *OPJ* p.67.
2. Ignatius Brianchaninov, *On the Prayer of Jesus* 17, *OPJ* p.134.
3. Cf. *Matthew* 23:27–28.

**vihāra** (S/Pa), **gtsug lag khang**, **dgon pa** (T), **zhù, jīngshè** (C), **jū, shōja** (J)

*Lit.* abode, residence, dwelling, monastery; originally, temporary huts or dwellings occupied by individual Buddhist monks or nuns during the rainy season (*varsha*), but which evolved into permanent residences, monasteries, and temples; also, posture, state of conduct, internal state of consciousness or being; a general term used in a variety of contexts, both literal and metaphorical.

Asking the rhetorical question, “What is meant by dwelling (*vihāra*)?” the *Mahāyāna* Buddhist philosopher Nāgārjuna (c.150–250) provides a convenient summary of some of the metaphorical meanings. Firstly, *vihāra* can refer to bodily postures:

The four bodily postures (*īryāpatha*): sitting (*nishadana*), lying down (*shayyā*), walking (*gamana*) and standing (*sthāna*) are called dwellings (*vihāra*).

Nāgārjuna, *Mahāprajñāpāramitā Shāstra* 5, T25 1509:75c–76a; cf. TVW1 pp.145–46

Secondly, it can refer to heavenly realms, where gods and noble disciples dwell:

There are three dwellings (*vihāra*): divine abodes (*divyavihāra*), the abode of *Brahmā* (*brahmavihāra*), and the abode of the noble ones (*āryavihāra*). The divine abodes (*divyavihāra*) are the abodes of the six classes of the gods of desire (*kāmadeva*). The *brahmavihāras* are the abodes of the *Brahmā* gods, etc., up to the gods who are neither with nor without knowing (*naivasamjñā-nāsamjñāyatana-deva*).

The abodes of the noble ones (*āryavihāra*) are the abodes of the *buddhas*, the *pratyeka-buddhas*, and the *arhats*.

Nāgārjuna, *Mahāprajñāpāramitā Shāstra* 5, T25 1509:75c; cf. TVW1 p.145

Thirdly, *vihāra* can refer to virtues and states of mind in which a meditator may “dwell”. These are related to the heavenly realms:

Three things, generosity (*dāna*), discipline (*śīla*), and good thoughts (*kushala-chitta*) constitute the *divyavihāra*. The four limitless minds (*apramāṇachitta*) – lovingkindness (*maitrī*), compassion (*karuṇā*), joy (*muditā*), and equanimity (*upekshā*) – constitute the *brahmavihāras*. The three *samādhis* (states of meditative concentration) – emptiness (*śūṇyatā*), imagelessness (*animitta*, freedom from concepts, unconditioned), and wishlessness (*apraṇihita*) – are called *āryavihāra*. The Buddha dwells in the *āryavihāras*.

Nāgārjuna, *Mahāprajñāpāramitā Shāstra* 5, T25 1509:75c–76a; cf. TVW1 p.145

Lastly, as *brahmavihāras*, *vihāras* can refer to the attributes of a *buddha*:

These are the innumerable *samādhis* such as the heroic progress (*shūraṃgama*), the ten powers (*bala*), the four fearlessnesses (*vaishāradya*), the eighteen special attributes (*āveṇika-dharma*) of the Buddha, omniscience (*sarvajñāna*) and wisdoms (*prajñā*) of all kinds. It is also the 84,000 baskets (*piṭaka*) of the *dharma* (*dharmapiṭaka*), the means of saving men. These various *buddha*-qualities are the places inhabited by the Buddha: the Buddha abides there.

*Nāgārjuna, Mahāprajñāpāramitā Śāstra* 5, T25 1509:76a; cf. TVW1 p.146

Illustrating the metaphorical use of *vihāra* as a state of mind, the Buddha counsels in the *Dhammapada*:

Let us live with happiness (*sukha*),  
without hatred among those who hate.  
Among the hateful, let us dwell (*vihārama*) hate-free. . . .

Let us live with happiness (*sukha*),  
free from care among the careworn;  
Among the careworn, let us dwell (*vihārama*) carefree.

*Dhammapada* 15:1, 3

*Vihāra* also appears in expressions such as *diṭṭhadhamma-sukha-vihāra* (a happy and contented life or emotional ‘dwelling’); and *anupubba-vihāra-samāpatti* (attainment of the successive abodes), also called the nine *anupubba-nirodhas* (successive cessations). The nine *anupubba-nirodhas* comprise the nine successive stages of spiritual evolution as a practitioner enters and transcends the eight *jhānas* (stages of meditative absorption), finally attaining complete *nirodha* (cessation) or *nirvāṇa* (extinction), which is the ninth stage.

Ten *bhūmis* – stages towards enlightenment in the progress of a *bodhisattva* – are listed in the *Dashabhūmika Sūtra* (which also appears as a chapter in the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*).<sup>1</sup> These are related to the thirteen *vihāras* (abodes, dwellings) listed in the *Bodhisattva-bhūmi Sūtra*.<sup>2</sup> The *Bodhisattva-bhūmi Sūtra* also points out the correspondences between its system of thirteen *vihāras* and that of the *Dashabhūmika Sūtra*. Although both describe a *bodhisattva*’s spiritual evolution towards enlightenment, the *Dashabhūmika Sūtra* charts this progress as steady acquisition of the ten *pāramitās* (perfections). The *Bodhisattva-bhūmi Sūtra*, on the other hand, bases its description on gradual realization of *nirnimitta bhāvanā* (cultivation of the Unconditioned), which culminates in entry to the *tathāgata-vihāra* (abode of the *buddhas*).<sup>3</sup>



See also: **brahmavihāra** (8.5), **varsha** (8.4).

1. *Dashabhūmika Sūtra*, T10 287; *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* 23–27, T9 278:542a5–78a3, *FOSC* (26) pp.698–811.
2. *Bodhisattva-bhūmi Sūtra*, Ms.1702 fol.120aff.
3. See Har Dayal, *Bodhisattva Doctrine in Buddhist Sanskrit Literature*, *BDBL* pp.278–91.

**vijñāna** (S), **viśyān** (H/Pu), **viññāṇa** (Pa), **rnam par shes pa** (T), **shí** (C), **shiki** (J)  
*Lit.* specific (*vi*) knowledge (*jñāna*, *gyān*); particular knowledge, systematized knowledge; detailed conceptual knowledge of the principles of nature or the world; hence, scientific knowledge, science, learning, worldly knowledge of any kind; also, depending on the context, consciousness, intellect, discrimination, intelligence, understanding, wisdom, gnosis, spiritual realization. In the Buddhist context, *rnam par shes pa* (T), *shí* (C) and *shiki* (J) are all generally translated as ‘consciousness’, although in the Buddhist context the term means something more specific and technical than its English translation.

Both *jñāna* and *vijñāna* are used in general or non-spiritual senses, but – like other terms for knowledge – they are also used for mystical knowledge or gnosis, the meaning in any particular instance depending very much on the context. The *Māṇḍūkya Upanishad*, for example, represents *vijñāna* as the pure consciousness, synonymous with the *ātman*:

It is consciousness (*vijñāna*) that appears to be born or to move or to take the form of matter. But in fact, it is unborn, immovable, and free from the attributes of materiality; it is all peace and non-dual.

*Gauḍapāda*, *Kārikā* 4:45, *On Māṇḍūkya Upanishad*; cf. U2 p.340

Ramakrishna, on the other hand, defines *vijñāna*, not as the *ātman* itself, but as genuine, personal experience of the omnipresence of *Brahman* – which is effectively the same. Intellectual knowledge based upon names, analysis and philosophical assertions is *jñāna*:

Shri Ramakrishna used to say that to accept names and forms divorced from the reality of *Brahman* is *ajñāna* (ignorance); to see *Brahman* alone, and deny the world, is philosophical knowledge (*jñāna*); but to see *Brahman* everywhere, in names and forms, in good and evil, pain and pleasure, life and death, as well as in the depths of meditation, is *vijñāna*, a supremely rich knowledge. Endowed with *vijñāna*, blessed souls commune with *Brahman* in meditation and devote themselves, when not meditating, to the service of the world.

*Swami Nikhilananda*, *Introduction*, U1 p.81

Speaking of lust (*kāma*) as the enemy of the soul, and the destroyer of all forms of knowledge and understanding, the *Bhagavad Gītā* also depicts *jñāna* as intellectual knowledge, and *vijñāna* as higher understanding:

The senses, the mind and the *buddhi* are said to be its seat. With these, it veils knowledge (*jñāna*) and deludes the embodied spirit. Therefore, controlling the senses at the very outset, slay this foul enemy (lust), the destroyer of all knowledge (*jñāna*) and understanding (*vijñāna*).

*Bhagavad Gītā* 3:40–41; cf. BGT

A *yogī* whose spirit (*ātmā*) has attained contentment through knowledge (*jñāna*) and understanding (*vijñāna*), who is unperturbed, who has subdued his senses, to whom a lump of earth and a bar of gold are alike – such a *yogī* is said to have attained steadfastness in spiritual communion.

*Bhagavad Gītā* 6:8; cf. BGT

The *Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad* uses the term in both senses. It equates *Brahman* with mystical knowledge itself: “*Brahman* is knowledge (*vijñāna*) and bliss (*ānanda*).”<sup>1</sup> Yet in another place, the same *Upanishad* uses *vijñāna* to mean limited human knowledge or understanding, acquired through the intellect. That which gives life and energy to knowledge, understanding and the intellect, it says, is the inner Self:

That which infuses understanding (*vijñāna*), yet is within understanding (*vijñāna*); which understanding (*vijñāna*) does not know; of which understanding (*vijñāna*) is but the body; and which controls understanding (*vijñāna*) from within – That is your Self (*Ātman*), the Inner Controller (*Antaryāmī*), the Immortal (*Amṛita*).

*Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad* 3:7.22

Likewise, in the *Kaṭha Upanishad*. In a well-known parable, the *ātman* (self, soul) is portrayed as the owner of a chariot; the body is the chariot itself; the senses (*indriyas*) are the horses; the objects of the world perceived by the senses are the roads; the mind (*manas*) is the reins; and the intellect (*buddhi*) is the charioteer who is supposed to guide the horses over roads rough and smooth while the master of the chariot sits peacefully as the observer, and enjoys the ride. Here, the *buddhi* refers to the faculty of reason, intelligence, and discrimination. A person with understanding (*vijñāna*) is one who keeps the mind and senses under control through the exercise of the *buddhi*. By contrast, lack of such control characterizes a person of no understanding (*avijñāna*). Here, *vijñāna* is clearly human understanding of spirituality rather than pure knowledge or gnosis of the Divine:

Know the *ātman* to be the master of the chariot,  
 the body, the chariot,  
 the *buddhi*, the charioteer,  
 and the mind (*manas*), the reins.  
 The senses, they say, are the horses,  
 the sense objects, the roads.  
 The *ātman*, associated with the body, the senses and the mind,  
 is – so say the wise – the enjoyer.

He who has no understanding (*avijñāna*),  
 whose mind is always unrestrained –  
 His senses are uncontrolled,  
 like the wild horses of a poor charioteer.  
 But he who has understanding (*vijñāna*),  
 whose mind is always restrained –  
 His senses are under control,  
 like the well-trained horses of a good charioteer.

He who has no understanding (*avijñāna*),  
 who has no control over his mind,  
 and always remains impure –  
 He never attains the goal, but returns again  
 to *saṃsāra* ('wandering', transmigration, worldly existence).  
 But he who has understanding (*vijñāna*),  
 who has control over his mind,  
 and always remains pure –  
 He attains that goal  
 from which he will not be born again.

He who has understanding (*vijñāna*) for his charioteer,  
 and firmly holds the reins of his mind –  
 He reaches the end of the journey:  
 the supreme dwelling of the All-pervading.

*Kaṭha Upanishad 1:3.3–9; cf. U1 pp.148–50*

According to *Advaita Vedānta*, a human being has three subtle coverings or sheaths (*koshas*) that comprise the subtle or astral body, and accompany the soul after death and on its further transmigratory meanderings. Of these, the *vijñānamaya-kosha* (sheath made of intelligence) comprises the *buddhi* (reasoning and discriminative faculty) and the mental counterpart to the five senses (*indriyas*). On the one hand, the pure consciousness of the *ātman* is limited by this and its other bodies and coverings, as a result of which it becomes the embodied soul or *jīva*. On the other hand,

this limited knowledge and understanding only exists because of the indwelling *ātman*:

Intellect (*buddhi*) is that function of the internal instrument (*antaḥ-karaṇa*) that discriminates. . . . This intellect (*buddhi*), together with the organs of perception, constitutes the sheath of intelligence (*viññānamaya-kosha*).

Of these sheaths, the sheath of intelligence (*viññānamaya-kosha*), which is endowed with the power of understanding (*viññāna*), is the agent; the mental sheath (*manomaya-kosha*), which is endowed with willpower, is the instrument; and the vital sheath (*prāṇamaya-kosha*), which is endowed with activity, is the product. This division has been made according to their respective functions. These three sheaths together constitute the subtle body.

*Sadānanda, Vedāntasāra 65, 72, 89; cf. VSY pp.46, 48, 53*

Shankara expounds the matter in greater detail. In the process, he uses *viññāna* in both the limited and unlimited senses. Enlightenment or “perfect knowledge (*samyag-jñāna*)”, he says, is the realization (*viññāna*) of one’s identity with *Brahman*, which is the essence of *viññāna*:

The *viññānamaya-kosha* is exceedingly effulgent, owing to its close proximity to the supreme Self (*Paramātman*). Because It (the *Paramātman*) identifies Itself with it (the *viññānamaya-kosha*), through this delusion, It suffers transmigration (*saṃsāra*). It is therefore a superimposition on the Self. The self-effulgent *ātman*, which is pure knowledge (*viññāna*), shines in the midst of the *prāṇa* (subtle life energy) within the mind. Though immutable, it becomes the agent and experiencer due to the superimposition of the *viññānamaya-kosha*. . . .

The cessation of that superimposition takes place through perfect knowledge (*samyag-jñāna*), and by no other means. Perfect knowledge (*samyag-jñāna*), according to the *Śrutis*, consists in the realization (*viññāna*) of the identity of the individual soul and *Brahman*. . . .

The realization (*viññāna*) of one’s identity with *Brahman* is the cause of liberation from the bonds of *saṃsāra*, by means of which the wise man attains *Brahman*, the One without a second, the bliss absolute. . . .

This universe is the supreme *Brahman* Itself – the Real, the One without a second, pure, the essence of knowledge (*viññāna*), taintless, serene, devoid of beginning and end, beyond activity, the essence of bliss absolute, transcending all the diversities created by *māyā* (illusion), eternal, ever beyond the reach of pain, indivisible, immeasurable, formless, undifferentiated, nameless, immutable, self-luminous.

*Shankara, Vivekachūḍāmaṇi 188–89, 202, 223, 237–38; cf. VCSM pp.73, 78, 87, 92*

The primal delusion is egotism, identification with that which is other than *Brahman*. The means of destroying this egotism is realization (*vijñāna*) of one's true identity with *Brahman*:

The treasure of the bliss of *Brahman* is encircled by the coils of the mighty and dreadful serpent of egoism, and guarded for its own use by means of its three fierce hoods, made up of the three *guṇas* (attributes). Only the wise man, destroying it by severing its three hoods with the greater sword of realization (*vijñāna*) in accordance with the teachings of the *Śrutis*, can enjoy this treasure which confers bliss....

Therefore, destroying this egotism, your enemy ... with the great sword of realization (*vijñāna*), enjoy directly and freely the bliss of your own empire, the majesty of the *ātman*....

Through the realization (*vijñāna*) of one's identity with *Brahman*, all the accumulated actions (*i.e. karmas*) of a hundred crores<sup>2</sup> of cycles (of birth and death) come to nought, like the actions (*karma*) of the dream state on awakening.

*Shankara, Vivekachūḍāmaṇi 302, 307, 447; cf. VCSM pp.115, 117, 168*

Among more recent Indian mystics, Paltū also differentiates between human and mystical knowledge, calling them *gyān* and *vigyān*. The higher knowledge is acquired through contact with the divine Word:

Only he who does not yearn for rational knowledge (*gyān*),  
but desires and earns spiritual knowledge (*vigyān*),  
bears the stamp of the true Word (*sat Shabd*).

*Paltū, Bānī 2, Rekhtā 65, PSB2 p.23*

In Jain conceptions of mind and consciousness, *vijñāna* is not a term that is commonly associated with any particular technical meaning, except perhaps for the expression *bheda-vijñāna* (science of discrimination), which is used for discrimination between the true Self and non-self, between the immortal and the transitory.

In Buddhism, *vijñāna* is generally translated as 'consciousness', but the term conveys more than the awareness understood by the Western meaning of 'consciousness'. In some instances, *vijñāna* is used in a general manner for mind or consciousness, and in this sense is used more or less interchangeably with *manas* and *chitta*. In other contexts, each of these three terms have specific meanings. Early Buddhist texts, for example, assign a particular form of consciousness or *vijñāna* to each of the five senses or sense bases (*āyatana*), as well as to both the body and mind. There is thus eye consciousness, taste consciousness, and so on, as well as body consciousness (*kāya-vijñāna*) and mind consciousness (*manovijñāna*).<sup>3</sup> These forms of *vijñāna* are responsible

for all experiences in *saṃsāra*, but *vijñāna* is not understood to possess a permanent existence as an eternal soul or transmigrating entity. The six forms of *vijñāna* and their respective sense bases (*āyatana*) are sometimes called the six *dhātus* (elements).

There are some differences between the various Buddhist schools regarding the meaning of *vijñāna*. *Theravāda* texts list six *vijñānas* (of the five senses and the mind), while *Mahāyāna sūtras* list seven, eight or nine, including *klišṭa-manas-vijñāna* (contaminated mind-consciousness) and *ālaya-vijñāna* (storehouse consciousness). In the *Yogācāra* school (also called *Vijñānavāda*, ‘Doctrine of Consciousness’), the first seven *vijñānas* are understood to arise from the *ālaya-vijñāna*, the foundation or continuum of consciousness in which the other kinds of consciousness exist. It is also the universal storehouse of consciousness in which all impressions and *karmas* are stored, and which is therefore the basis of all worldly experience. From it arise all other states of consciousness experienced in *saṃsāra*. In the *Yogācāra* view, human existence is no more than modifications of consciousness or *vijñāna*, the origin of which is the eighth, the *ālaya-vijñāna*. In the *Mahāsāṃghika* school, the precursor of *Mahāyāna* and *Yogācāra* doctrines, this foundational consciousness is known as *mūla-vijñāna* (root consciousness).

*Vijñāna*, as consciousness of the five sense bases and the mind, is also the last of the five *skandhas* (Pa. *khandhas*) – the five ‘aggregates’ or ‘collections’ that comprise a human being. Considered simply, the *skandhas* are aspects of mind and body, clinging or attachment to which gives rise to the illusory sense of I-ness or individuality. They represent the multiplicity of existence at the physical level of existence. There are some variations among the various Buddhist schools in the way the five *skandhas* are understood, but fundamentally they are: corporeality or form (S/Pa. *rūpa*), which is experienced through the senses; feeling or sensation (S/Pa. *vedanā*), which is the corresponding physical or mental sensation arising from the activity of the five senses and the mind; perception (S. *saṃjñā*, Pa. *saññā*), which includes most aspects of everyday thinking, as well as mental function in higher spheres of consciousness; mental formations (S. *saṃskāra*, Pa. *sankhāra*), which can be good or bad, and include such things as habits, conditioned attitudes, likes, dislikes, and other mental impressions that make up who an individual thinks he is; and lastly, personal consciousness (S. *vijñāna*, Pa. *viññāṇa*), which in this context is understood to arise from the activities of the other *skandhas*.

It is explained in the *Khajjanīya Sutta* of the *Samyutta Nikāya* that *viññāṇa* is called ‘consciousness’ because it ‘cognizes’. It is the outcome of the functioning of the other four *khandhas*: sensory input from the body (*rūpa*) leads to mental sensation (*vedanā*), which leads to perception (*saññā*) and thence to mental reaction and consideration (*sankhāra*), all of which amounts to individual consciousness (*viññāṇa*) of the original sensory input. In this instance, the Buddha is taking the sensation of taste as his example:

And why do you call it ‘consciousness (*viññāṇa*)’? Because it cognizes, thus it is called ‘consciousness (*viññāṇa*)’. What does it cognize? It cognizes what is sour, bitter, pungent, sweet, alkaline, non-alkaline, salty, and unsalty. Because it cognizes, it is called ‘consciousness (*viññāṇa*)’.

*Samyutta Nikāya 22:79, Khajjanīya Sutta, PTSS3 p.87, SNTB*

*Vijñāna* has the same meaning when understood as the third of the twelve causes (*nidāna*) of dependent origination (*pratītya-samutpāda*), the chain of causation that traces the inevitable outcome of the processes of death, rebirth, and suffering (*duḥkha*). Spiritual ignorance (*avidyā*) leads to bodily and mental activities (*saṃskāras*), which lead to individual consciousness (*vijñāna*), and so on. *Vijñāna* is that part of the mind which cognizes and experiences the worlds of phenomena, which registers and stores experiences, and leads inexorably to the next birth.

*Viññāṇa* is also the fourth of the four nutriments (Pa. *āhāra*). These are: material food (Pa. *kabalinkārāhāra*); sensory and mental impressions (Pa. *phassa*); mental intention and volition (Pa. *mano-sañcetanā*), which gives rise to actions and the resultant *karma*; and consciousness (*viññāṇa*), which feeds and gives substance to mind and body at the time of rebirth. Apart from the first, the meaning of ‘nutriments’ is figurative.

Buddhist scholars of the various schools have devised a number of conceptual systems to describe the functioning of consciousness in great detail. The analytical *Abhidhamma* literature, for instance, distinguishes eighty-nine kinds of consciousness or states of mind (Pa. *citta*), both karmically wholesome and unwholesome, that are experienced in the sensory (*kāmaloka*), the subtle (*rūpaloka*), the immaterial or formless (*arūpaloka*), and supramundane realms. These refer to states of mind experienced as a human being or as a being in the hellish realms or sensory heavens (*kāmaloka*); states experienced in the four lower *jhānas* (states of meditative absorption), which are natural to the denizens of those heavenly realms (*rūpaloka*); states experienced in the four higher or immaterial *jhānas*, which are natural to the inhabitants of those realms (*arūpaloka*); and the state of consciousness that experiences *nibbāna*.

In a Buddhist context, when *vijñāna* is compared with *jñāna*, *vijñāna* generally refers to specific aspects of consciousness at the human level, while *jñāna* can mean both lower and higher knowledge or gnosis. In the *Lankāvatāra Sūtra*, a *Mahāyāna* text set largely as a dialogue between the Buddha and the *bodhisattva* Mahāmāti (‘Great Wisdom’), the Buddha explains the difference between the two:

I will tell you, Mahāmāti, about the features of *jñāna* (absolute knowledge) and *vijñāna* (relative knowledge); and when you and other *bodhisattva-mahāsattvas* are well conversant with these distinctive

features of *jñāna* and *vijñāna*, you will quickly realize supreme enlightenment. There are three kinds of *jñāna* – mundane, supramundane, and transcendental. Now, mundane knowledge (*laukika jñāna*) belongs to the philosophers and to the ignorant and simple-minded who are attached to dualistic views of being and nonbeing. Supramundane knowledge (*lokottara jñāna*) belongs to all the *shrāvakas* (disciples) and *pratyeka-buddhas* (non-teaching *buddhas* who attain enlightenment for themselves alone), who are attached to notions of individuality and generality. Transcendental knowledge (*lokottaratama jñāna*), which is free from the dualism of being and nonbeing, belongs to the *buddhas* and *bodhisattvas* and arises when they contemplate deeply those things that are not mere appearances, see into the state of no-birth and no-annihilation, and experience absence of ego at the stage of buddhahood.

*Vijñāna* is subject to birth and destruction, and *jñāna* is not subject to birth and destruction. Further, Mahāmati, *vijñāna* falls into (the dualism of) form and no-form, being and nonbeing, and is characterized by multiplicity; but *jñāna* is identified by transcendence of (the dualism of) form and no-form.

*Lankāvatāra Sūtra* 2:66, *LSBN* pp.156–57; cf. *LSMT* pp.135–36

See also: **āhāra** (►4), **ālaya-vijñāna**, **avidyā** (6.2), **jñāna**, **pratītya-samutpāda** (►1), **vidyā**.

1. *Bṛihadāranyaka Upanishad* 3:9.28.
2. One crore is ten million.
3. See “*vijñāna*,” *Oxford Dictionary of Buddhism*, *ODB*.